LOUIS TIKARAM'S PEKING DUCK MASTERCLASS

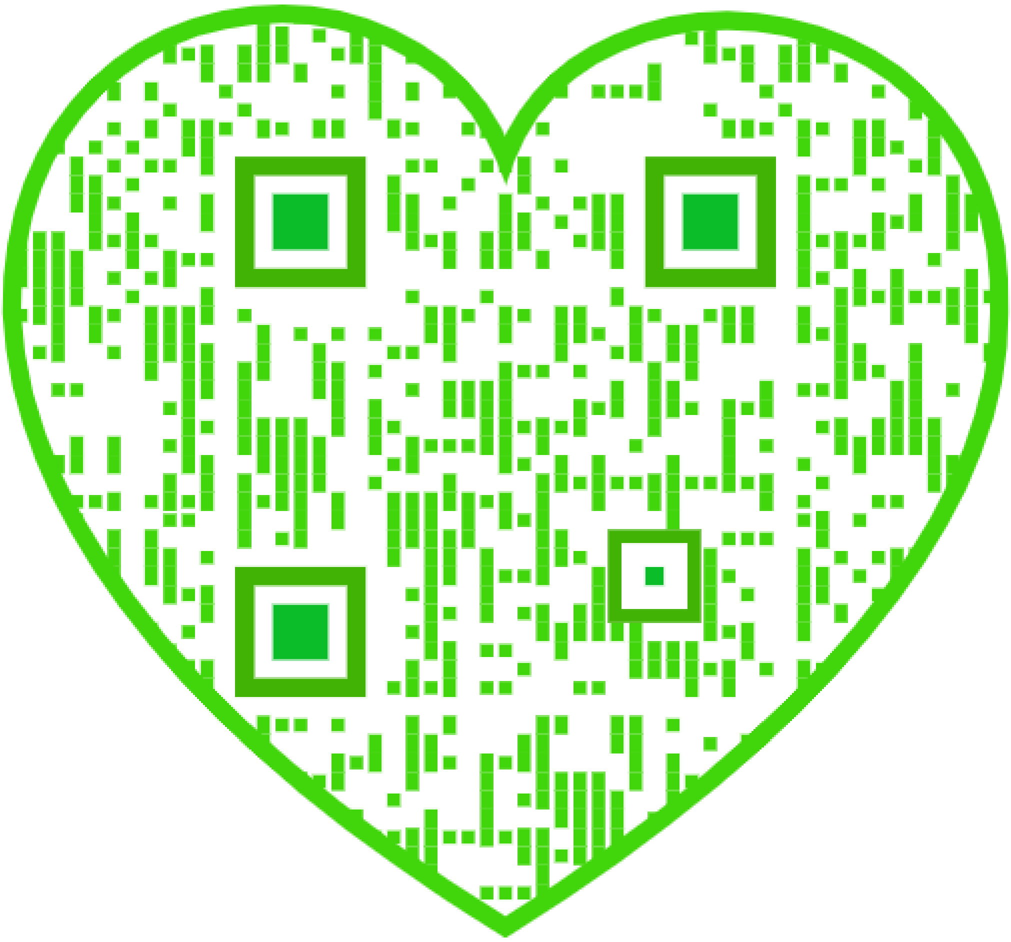
# GOURMET TRAVELLER

Our ultimate long weekend recipes and tranquil escapes

## TAKE YOUR TIME

EXPLORING QUEENSLAND'S SCENIC RIM

LONG WEEKEND ADVENTURES FROM SINGAPORE



# Great taste is inherited

Executive Chef Hugh Allen’s introduction to induction cooking started at a young age in his family home and continues in the commercial kitchen at Vue de monde.

With firsthand experience of Miele induction in his own home, Hugh knows how its precision, speed, and flawless control make exceptional taste something that’s inherited, not just learned.

Once a Miele, **Always a Miele.**

TRP MI 13076

INDIAN PACIFIC
THE GHAN
GREAT SOUTHERN
DELICIOUS
*by Train*
2026 NOW ON SALE
JOURNEY BEYOND

Discover ever-changing landscapes, world-class food and wine, culture and people, exploring Australia by train. While there are many ways to see it, there's only one way to really do it. That's on an all-inclusive, fabulously fun rail journey. 2026 adventures from $2,490* per person.

Visit **journeybeyondrail.com.au**, call **1800 703 357**, or contact your local travel agent.

*Conditions apply. Advertised price is per person based on the Advance Purchase fare on The Ghan from Adelaide to Darwin in a Gold Twin cabin in March 2026. Prices are subject to availability. Booking and credit card fees may apply. For full terms and conditions visit journeybeyondrail.com.au/terms-conditions. Prices correct as at 26 February 2025.

**FOOD**

# April

## 72 Everyday

Roasted eggplant and ezme salad 72
Crisp chorizo and chickpea pasta with harissa and burnt butter yoghurt 73
Oven-roasted Thai curry with pumpkin and tofu 74
Prawn and broccolini fried rice with chilli oil 75
Zucchini yemesta with avgolemono sauce 76
Mango pickle butter roasted lamb with roti 77
Pepper-crusted pork with crushed potatoes and fragrant spiced oil 78
Spicy Sichuan chicken with rolled rice noodles 79
Salt and vinegar pan-fried chicken with soft polenta and capers 80
Baked mocha and ricotta pudding with chocolate sauce 81

### In focus

**BASICS** Roast potatoes 82
**MASTERCLASS** Peking duck 84

## 88 The long lunch

**Long weekends were made for hosting long, lazy lunches. Here are the best recipes to share and savour.**

Five-herb no-knead focaccia 90
Whipped feta with hot honey 90
Smoked beetroot galette 93
Slow-roasted pork neck with celeriac mash and pickled apple 94
Heirloom carrot and mandarin salad 96
Brioche bread and butter pudding with hazelnut crumble and roasted plums 96

## 98 Give a fig

**Fig is the star of the show this autumn. Take advantage with these sweet and savoury recipes.**

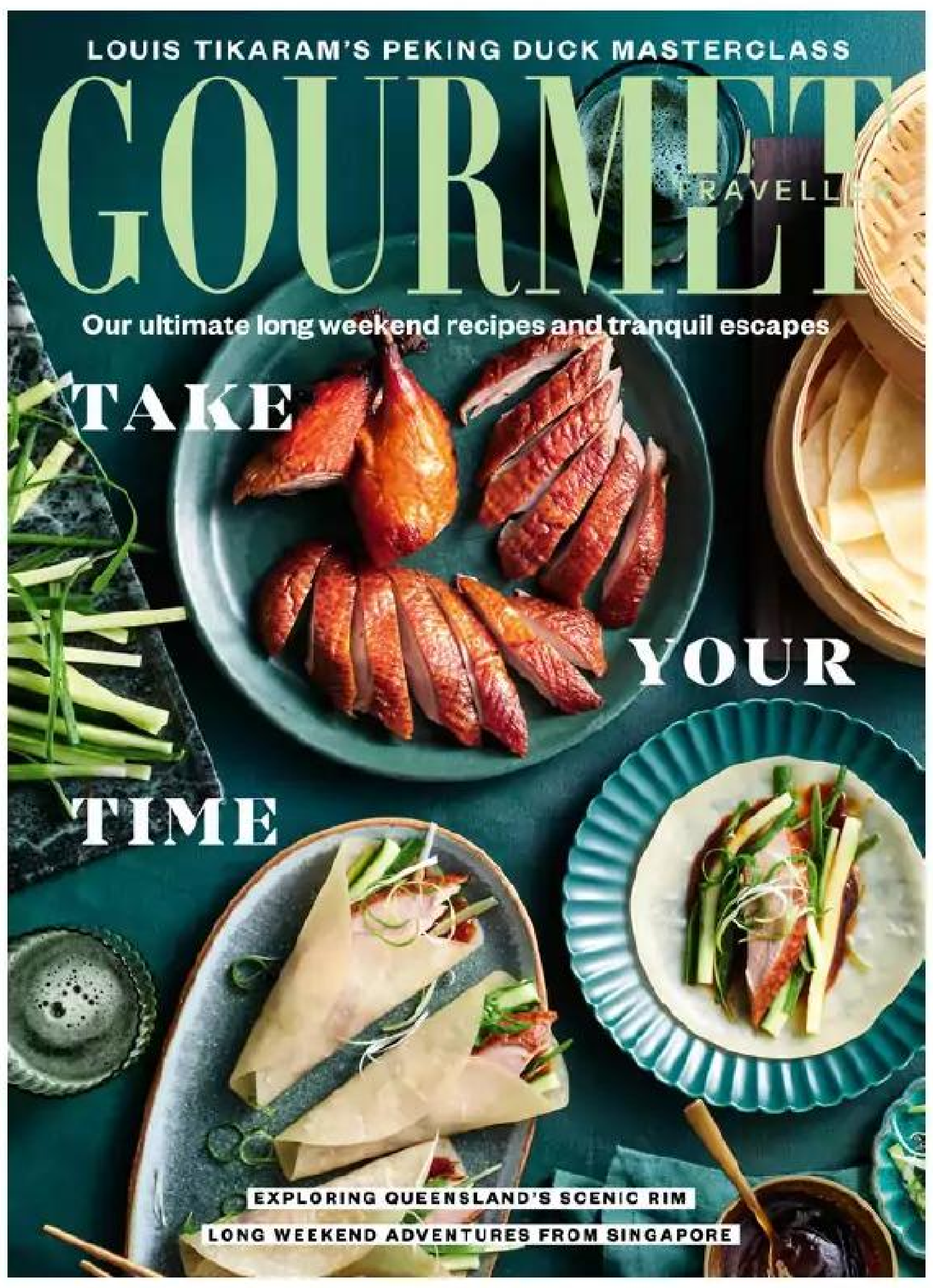
Fig leaf-baked brie with pickled figs and fennel seed fougasse 101
Saganaki with burnt honey, roasted hazelnuts and marinated figs 101
Lamb, fig and fillo pot pies with feta skordalia 102
Fig leaf-stuffed chicken on saffron rice with fig shirazi 105
Fig, fennel and grain salad with citrus dressing and spiced seeds 105
Sticky fig pudding with tahini butterscotch and fig leaf ice-cream 106
Flourless fig leaf and pistachio cake with rose and raspberries 106

## 108 Art of abundance

**Noor Murad shares dishes and stories from the Middle East in her new cookbook, *Lugma*.**

Pan-fried tomatoes with za'atar, pine nuts and haloumi 109
Cheesy leek and za'atar fatayer 110
Sautéed greens with yoghurt, fried onions and turmeric oil 111
Arabic baked beans 112
Sweet date and sour tamarind sea bass 113

PHOTOGRAPHY ALICIA TAYLOR.


LOUIS TIKARAM'S PEKING DUCK MASTERCLASS
GOURMET
TRAVELLER
Our ultimate long weekend recipes and tranquil escapes
TAKE
YOUR
TIME
EXPLORING QUEENSLAND'S SCENIC RIM
LONG WEEKEND ADVENTURES FROM SINGAPORE

## ON THE COVER

Peking duck, p84

**Recipe**
Louis Tikaram
**Photography**
James Moffatt
**Styling**
Elisa Baker

## SUBSCRIBE

magshop.com.au/GMT
*Details p52*

## FEATURES

54
**Where the wild things are**
Michael Harden discovers a nose-to-tail feast at a wilderness retreat in Currawong Lakes.

60
**Counting beans**
Bean-to-bar chocolate is thriving. Luke Owen Smith explores a vast new flavour landscape.

64
**Flavour trip**
Long weekends were made for adventure. Jess Ho takes us on a culinary odyssey of Melbourne.

## DRINKS

46 **DRINKS NEWS**
New openings and expert tips.

48 **WINE PEOPLE**
Natillie Johnston.

49 **COCKTAIL HOUR**
Take Two.

50 **READY, STEADY, GO**
Samantha Payne on the perfect long weekend sips.

## REGULARS

13 **UPFRONT**
Editor's letter and news.

28 **COMMUNITY X KYLIE**
Hoor Al Qasimi.

30 **FOUR OF A KIND**
Tahini.

33 **REVIEW** Dining out.

116 **THE ART OF TRAVEL**
Lingering longer.

126 **CHECKING IN**
Melbourne Place.

136 **GT AT SEA**
*Silver Ray*.

150 **HOME** Natural element.

154 **OBJECT OF DESIRE**
Tea set.

## TRAVEL

118
**From paddock to peaks**
Elliot Baker explores the exceptional produce and natural beauty of Queensland's Scenic Rim.

128
**Singapore fling**
Singapore is the perfect launch pad for a long weekend escape to luxury, writes Karlie Verkerk.

138
**Wellness redefined**
Jordan Kretchmer uncovers the latest luxury hotel spas and retreats for ultimate indulgence.

WEDGWOOD
EST. IN ENGLAND
JW
1759
WILD STRAWBERRY
INKY BLUE
WEDGWOOD.COM

GOURMET
JOURNEYS
GOURMET TRAVELLER
Cobram Estate
Cobram Estate
QT HOTELS • RESORTS

SUBSCRIBE OR RENEW TO

GOURMET TRAVELLER LUXE

FOR JUST $149.99

YOUR MEMBERSHIP INCLUDES;

+ **12 ISSUES** of *Gourmet Traveller* magazine home delivered!

+ **12 MONTHS** of digital subscription access

+ ***Gourmet Traveller* Tote Bag**

+ **Riedel twin pack glassware**

+ **1 Cobram Estate Ultra Premium ExtraVirgin Olive Oil**

+ **20% off QT Hotels & Resorts bookings**

+ **Exclusive pre-sale access and discounts** to *Gourmet Traveller* events

+ ***Gourmet Traveller Journeys***

+ **Luxe member monthly newsletter and special offers**

**WWW.MAGSHOP.COM.AU/GMTLUXE24 OR**
**☎ 136 116 AND QUOTE M23GTLUXET**

Savings based on *Gourmet Traveller* cover price of $11.50. For full terms and conditions, visit magshop.com.au/GMTLUXE. Offer valid from October 2, 2024 to Australian residents only 18yrs or over. Subscription copies do not receive free gifts offered at retail. Please see contents page for location of our Privacy Notice. Our Privacy Policy can also be found at aremedia.com.au/privacy and includes important information about our collection, use and disclosure of your personal information (including the provision of targeted advertising based on your online activities). It explains that if you do not provide us with information we have requested from you, we may not be able to provide you with the goods and services you require. It also explains how you can access or seek correction of your personal information, how you can complain about a breach of the Australian Privacy Principles and how we will deal with a complaint of that nature. For full Magshop terms and conditions, please visit magshop.com.au/terms. You must supply a valid email address to receive certain benefits including the monthly newsletter, exclusive access to events and discounts. Please allow up to 6 weeks to receive your subscriber bonus gifts. This offer includes 1 Gourmet Traveller tote bag, 1 Cobram Estate Ultra Premium Extra Virgin Olive Oil, and *Gourmet Traveller Journeys*. Please note each subscriber will receive a set of either champagne or wine glassware from Riedel. One gift per subscription. Additional styling props used on this creative are not included in your GT Luxe membership package. QT Hotel offer entitles Luxe members to 20% off Best Available Rates at QT Hotels and Resorts across Australia and New Zealand for a single booking at one time. Blackout dates and other restrictions may apply. Further terms and conditions may apply.

GOURMET TRAVELLER

Joanna Hunkin
Editor

Art & Food

| | |
|---|---|
| Creative Director | **Jacqui Triggs** |
| Senior Designer | **Sam Yates** |
| Senior Food Editor | **Maxwell Adey** |

Words

| | |
|---|---|
| Deputy Editor | **Ceri David** |
| Digital Editor | **Cordelia Williamson** |
| Senior Sub Editor | **Suzanna Chriss** |
| News Editor | **Jordan Kretchmer** |
| Senior Digital Content Producer | **Charlotte Wishart** |
| Editorial Coordinator | **Alexandra Harris** |

Contributors
Elliot Baker, Alexandra Carlton, Michael Harden, Anna Hart, Jess Ho, Kylie Kwong, Alex Mitcheson, Luke Owen-Smith, Samantha Payne, Katie Spain, Max Veenhuyzen, Karlie Verkerk

@gourmettraveller

askgourmet@aremedia.com.au

are media
**GOURMETTRAVELLER.COM.AU**

Published by Are Media Pty Limited. ABN 18 053 273 546. 54-58 Park St, Sydney, NSW, 2000, (02) 9282 8000. The trade mark *Gourmet Traveller* is the property of Are Media Pty Limited and is used under licence. ©2025 All rights reserved. Printed by IVE, Unit 1/83 Derby St, Silverwater, NSW, 2128. National distribution by Are Direct Pty Ltd. 1300 650 666. *Gourmet Traveller* cannot accept unsolicited manuscripts or photographs. If such materials are sent to the magazine, they will not be returned. Price in Australia, $12.50; in New Zealand, NZ$13.50; digital edition, $3.99. Subscription rates: 1 year (12 issues) $85 via automatic renewal; 1 year (12 issues) $90 via credit card or cheque; NZ (airspeed) 1 year, $145; overseas (airspeed) 1 year, $345; digital edition 1 year, $24.99. Vol 20 No 5 ISSN 1034-9006.

PHOENIX KITCHEN
DESIGN POLIFORM

**SYDNEY | MELBOURNE**
POLIFORMAUSTRALIA.COM.AU

FINE DINING AT SEA, REIMAGINED

The upgraded culinary offerings on Oceania Cruises' *Allura*™ are the ideal pairing of classic and modern techniques with traditional and innovative flavours

THE NEW CLASSICS

Cuisine is so much more than fuel, and at sea, where every experience is an adventure, loading up a plate of classic comfort food can satisfy the heart as well as the stomach. That's why the 270-plus new recipes on offer in *Allura*'s Grand Dining Room often hark back to old favourites, with a refreshing and modern update. Some are straight from Chef Alexis Quaretti's childhood, like the Mousse au Chocolat de Mamie Huguette – which uses his grandmother's cherished recipe – and others deliver a new twist on a known flavour, like the Scallop Panna Cotta with caviar – a surprising contrast of silkiness and briny depth. Each item served onboard embodies a simple philosophy: honour the past, savour the present, and focus on flavours which leave a lasting impression.

ALL-DAY AFFAIR

It's not just dinner that's had a rethink. With the revitalised breakfast menu, you can start the day with an inspiring array of variations on a favourite – the creamy goodness of Eggs Benedict is made exciting with creamy spinach, smoked salmon and more. For something new, the rotating selection of daily specials include a zucchini waffle, brioche breakfast sliders and Mexican burritos.

At lunchtime the Grand Dining Room becomes a Parisian paradise, also known as La Brasserie. The French bistro offers refined flavours in elegantly presented dishes such as Blanquette De Veau à L'Ancienne – a creamy veal stew – and traditional Coq Au Vin – red wine-braised chicken. Come evening, enjoy a skilfully harmonious blend of global cuisine and modern techniques, spotlit in the new menu section Chef's Recommendations. Dishes handpicked by Chef Quaretti himself include a delicate seafood vol-au-vent and a rich Duck Foie Gras escallop. The perfect balance of flavour and comfort await in every dish.

**For more information call 1300 355 200, visit oceaniacruises.com or contact your travel advisor**

OCEANIA CRUISES®
YOUR WORLD. YOUR WAY.®

GOURMET TRAVELLER

Advertising

| | |
|---|---|
| **Commercial Brand Manager** | Ashley Lazar |
| **Advertising Production Manager** | Kate Orsborn |
| **Brand Executive** | Emma O'Sullivan |
| **Senior Events Manager** | Cate Gazal |
| **Head of Direct Sales (Vic, SA, WA)** | Will Jamison |
| **Queensland Head of Sales** | Judy Taylor |
| **Creative Director** | Clare Catt |
| **Production Manager** | Carla Olivieri |
| **Advertising Production Coordinator** | Dominic Roy |
| **Advertising enquiries** | advertising@aremedia.com.au |

Marketing, Research & Circulation

| | |
|---|---|
| **Director of Marketing** | Carly Bowra |
| **Marketing Manager** | Jennifer Burke |
| **Circulation and Insights Manager** | Nicole Pearson |
| **Senior Research Analyst** | Ania Falenciak |
| **Senior Subscriptions Marketing Manager** | Ellie Xuereb |
| **Subscriptions Campaign Manager** | Emma Lawlor |

Are Media

| | |
|---|---|
| **Chief Executive Officer** | Jane Huxley |
| **Director of Content** | Sally Eagle |
| **General Manager of Luxury** | Nicky Briger |
| **Director of Sales** | Andrew Cook |
| **Business Manager** | Melissa Tanudjaja |

**Editorial office** GPO Box 4088, Sydney, NSW 2001, Australia **phone** +61 2 9282 8758

Subscriptions

*Gourmet Traveller*, Reply Paid 5252, Sydney, NSW 2001, Australia,
phone 136 116, email delivery@magshop.com.au

are media

GOURMETTRAVELLER.COM.AU

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

***Gourmet Traveller* acknowledges the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation as the traditional custodians of the place we now call Sydney, where this magazine is published. *Gourmet Traveller* also pays respects to Elders past and present.**

This issue of *Gourmet Traveller* is published by Are Media Pty Ltd (Are Media). Are Media may use and disclose your information in accordance with our Privacy Policy, including to provide you with your requested products or services and to keep you informed of other Are publications, products, services and events. Our Privacy Policy is located at aremedia.com.au/privacy/. It also sets out how you can access or correct your personal information and lodge a complaint. Are Media may disclose your personal information offshore to its owners, joint venture partners, service providers and agents located throughout the world, including in New Zealand, USA, the Philippines and the European Union. In addition, this issue may contain Reader Offers, being offers, competitions or surveys. Reader Offers may require you to provide personal information to enter or to take part. Personal information collected for Reader Offers may be disclosed by us to service providers assisting Are Media in the conduct of the Reader Offer and to other organisations providing special prizes or offers that are part of the Reader Offer. An opt-out choice is provided with a Reader Offer. Unless you exercise that opt-out choice, personal information collected for Reader Offers may also be disclosed by us to other organisations for use by them to inform you about other products, services or events or to give to other organisations that may use this information for this purpose. If you require further information, please contact Are's Privacy Officer either by email at privacyofficer@aremedia.com.au or mail to Privacy Officer, Are Media Pty Ltd, 54 Park St, Sydney, NSW 2000.

*Created for* FOODIES *by* FOODIES

Food is at the heart of everything we do. Through travel and food, we learn about the world, creating connections and memories that last a lifetime. Travel and food open the door to new experiences and are the most amazing ways to celebrate the world – and the people around us.

*"Travel and food are the ultimate ways of bringing people together – to savor unique flavors, experience different destinations and create shared memories."*

GIADA DE LAURENTIIS
*Oceania Cruises Culinary and Brand Ambassador*

ΧΤΑΠΟΔΙ
ΜΥΔΙΑ

THE FINEST CUISINE AT SEA®
AWARD-WINNING ITINERARIES
SMALL SHIP LUXURY™

OCEANIA
CRUISES®
YOUR WORLD. YOUR WAY.®

**EXCLUSIVE TO GOURMET TRAVELLER, WHEN BOOKING QUOTE OCEANIAGT25 TO RECEIVE A COMPLIMENTARY WINE BUNDLE**

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL **1300 355 200**
VISIT **OCEANIACRUISES.COM** OR CONTACT YOUR **TRAVEL ADVISOR**

VIEW ALL
VOYAGES

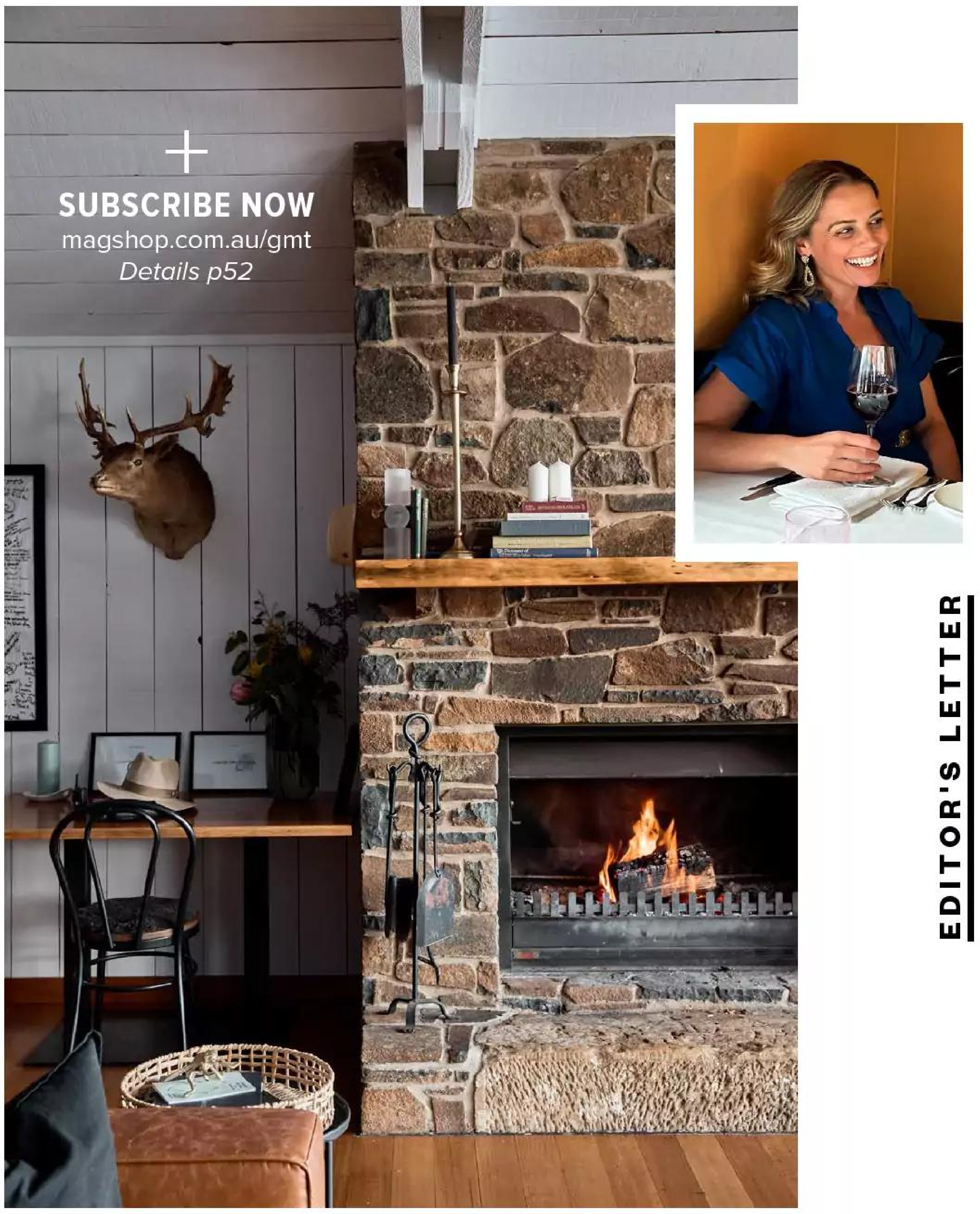
Terms and conditions: Gourmet Traveller Complimentary Wine Bundle is applicable to all standard fares, per stateroom based on double occupancy and for new bookings only. Wine Bundle will be available in guest stateroom once final payment has been received. Ends 31st December 2025. Ask for PROMO CODE OCEANIAGT25. For full terms & conditions that apply, please visit OceaniaCruises.com/terms. All rights reserved. Oceania Cruises is not responsible for typographical errors or omissions. Ships' Registry: Marshall Islands. NCL Australia Pty Ltd ABN 8060 7578 781.

Dolce & Gabbana
SMEG

SMEG

**FINE ART DECORATION**
DOLCE&GABBANA Artwork
SMEG embodied technology
Made in Italy

shop.smeg.com.au



SUBSCRIBE NOW
magshop.com.au/gmt
*Details p52*

## EDITOR'S LETTER

There is something special about this time of year; that short window between the last of the summer heat and the arrival of winter's drab grey cloak. Autumn often feels like the shortest of our seasons, which only adds to its allure. The fact it falls in step with both Easter and Anzac Day – which happily converge as back-to-back long weekends this year – is certainly part of its charm.

Some of my fondest memories as a teenager, and well into my twenties, are of April long weekends in New Zealand. When it's still warm enough for a bracing morning dip yet cool enough to sip pinot noir, fireside, as night falls (or perhaps Vodka Cruisers if we're recalling my younger years).

It's also the time of year I am most drawn to the kitchen. When the thought of planning and pottering my way through a day or two of prep – perhaps even attempting Louis Tikaram's cover star Peking duck – feels like a genuine indulgence. It's the only time Sunday lunch can comfortably roll into dinner without the creeping anxiety that the office will shortly beckon.

Of course, some people will choose to maximise their annual leave and head on an overseas adventure. But for those, like me, who choose to stay closer to home and indulge in the art of long weekending, let this issue be your guide.

Joanna

## CONTRIBUTORS

### LOUIS TIKARAM

**Masterclass, p84, recipe**

Growing up in Mullumbimby, NSW, and then carving out a career as a chef in both Sydney and Los Angeles, Tikaram is now settled in sunny Brisbane. Here he helms Cantonese restaurant Stanley, where he explores his Chinese heritage. In this issue he shares his recipe for our cover star, Peking duck. "It's an absolute labour of love," says Tikaram. "When you trust the process, the result is so special."

### KARLIE VERKERK

**Singapore fling, p128, words**

Former *Gourmet Traveller* deputy editor Karlie Verkerk now resides in Singapore, where her love for food and discovery has only increased. This month she shares the best next-stops to tack onto a Singaporean stopover. "One of my favourite things about Singapore is that you can access some of Southeast Asia's best luxury escapes within hours. Feet in sand, cocktail in hand!"

### NESS VANDERBURGH

**Where the wild things are, p60, photography**

Launceston-based photographer Ness Vanderburgh's work documents life both on the beautiful island of Lutruwita/Tasmania, and beyond. In this issue she showcases Currawong Lakes. "Adventure and leisure come together around a sustainable food ethos here," says Vanderburgh. "It's the most deliciously curated Tassie experience I've ever had the pleasure of capturing."

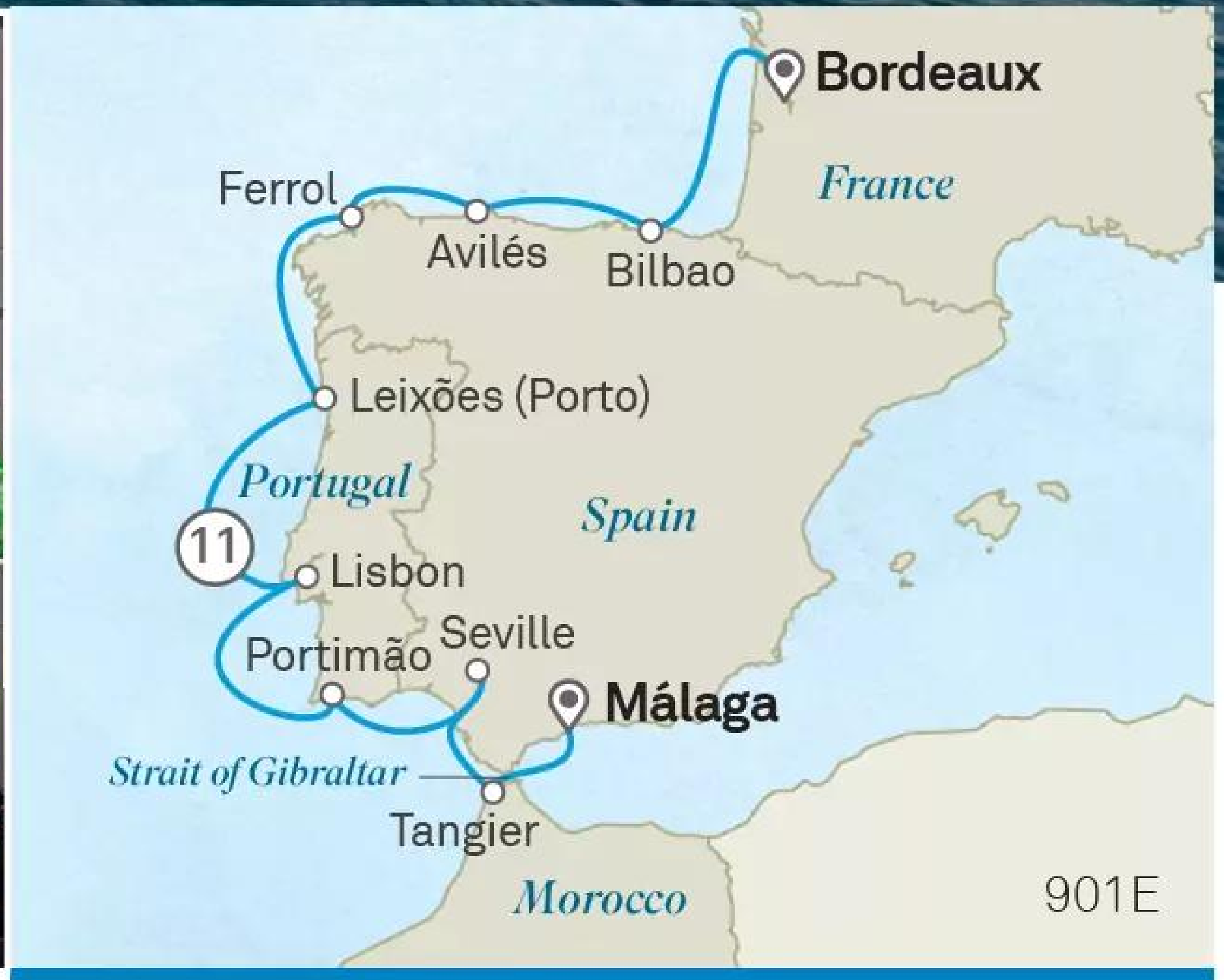
PHOTOGRAPHY ALANA LANDSBERRY (VERKERK) & NESS VANDERBURGH (CURRAWONG LAKES).

# SCENIC° ECLIPSE

*in a class of its own*

Spacious Suites with Butler Service

Over 130 Included Whiskeys



## Spain, Portugal & France in Ultra All-Inclusive, Ultra-Luxury

Discover the enchanting history and cultures of Spain, Portugal and France with only up to 228 guests. Sail inland for a night in Seville and cruise down the Garonne River to dock in the heart of Bordeaux.

Relax in your spacious verandah suite with butler service. Rejuvenate in the 500sqm Senses Spa# and take a culinary journey at up to 10 included world-class dining experiences and eight bars and lounges.

*With Scenic, it's more than an ocean voyage...*

*It's an unrivalled journey on The World's First Discovery Yachts™*

**To book vist sceniceclipse.com,**
**your local Travel Advisor or call us on 138 128**

*Terms and Conditions Apply. Super Earlybird Savings from $5,000pp* is off the full fare and is based on 901E090726.2 in a category B. Prices are in AUD, per person and twin share and inclusive of savings. For new bookings, strictly limited and subject to availability until sold out. Deposit of 20% is due within 7 days of booking and full payment is required within 10 months of departure. +All drinks on board are included except for a very small number of rare, fine and vintage wines, Champagnes and spirits. #Spa treatments at addition cost. ^Flights on board our two helicopters and submersible experiences are at additional cost, subject to regulatory approval, availability, weight restrictions, medical approval and weather conditions. Helicopter is not in operation in France and submersible is not in operation in France, Spain, Portugal or Morocco. Prices correct as of 10/03/2025and all bookings are subject to our full terms and conditions at scenic.com.au/terms. ABN 85 002 715 602

## Wine & Culinary Delights

12 Days Málaga > Bordeaux

Departs 9 July 2026

**From $18,290pp***

**Save from $5,000pp***

### Includes:

- Spacious Verandah Suite
- All meals & beverages+
- Scenic Freechoice & Scenic Enrich
- Wellness facilities, gym, Pilates & yoga studio
- Airport transfers & tipping

**Australia-wide restaurant openings**
PAGE 16

**A heartfelt new food and travel show**
PAGE 20

**Lucas Group's latest Sydney expansion**
PAGE 22

**Bliss at the Anantara Ubud**
PAGE 24

# News

Preserves and dried chillies at Barragunda Dining, Mornington Peninsula.

PHOTOGRAPHY ARIANNA LEGGIERO.

# Restaurant news

THE LATEST FROM CHEFS AND RESTAURANTS AROUND AUSTRALIA

Fresh openings on Victoria's Mornington Peninsula, joined by a restaurant redux in Tasmania and a Sydney import for Melbourne.

EDITED BY **JORDAN KRETCHMER**

## MELBOURNE

Sydney chef Junda Khoo will bring his clever take on Malaysian flavours to Melbourne with a slated Easter opening. Landing a three-level site at 235 Bourke Street with an entrance on Royal Lane, each floor will feature a separate menu and vibe. "So, it's like having three different Ho Jiak concepts under one roof," says Khoo. The ground floor will be home to **Da Bao**, with a street-food focus. Expect "stuff like nasi lemak, Hainan chicken rice and a bain-marie with different dishes – similar to the "chap fan" stores on the street in Malaysia". The first floor – named **Ho Jiak** after the original in Sydney's Strathfield – is set to be more formal, exploring the cultural intersections of the cuisine with a levelled-up playfulness. "That's where we will be doing our elevated Malaysian dishes, so the laksa bombs, oysters, steak and a good wine list," says Khoo. Finally, the crowning second floor will be a rooftop beer hall with home-style family favourites, called **Ho Liao**, which means "good stuff" in Hokkien.

## MORNINGTON PENINSULA

Cape Schanck has welcomed **Barragunda Dining**, an ambitious 40-seat restaurant with circular farming at its core. Tending and harvesting produce from the 1000-acre Barragunda Estate on which it sits, the restaurant is the result of more than four years' dedicated work. Philanthropist Hayley Morris has worked alongside Mornington

PHOTOGRAPHY KRISTOFFER PAULSEN.

**Clockwise from right: Oirthir's exterior, and owners Bob Piechniczek and Jillian McInnes; and Ho Jiak's dry laksa prawns. Opposite, clockwise from right: Barragunda Dining's interiors; fresh produce; and chef Simone Watts in the garden.**

Peninsula local and chef Simone Watts to bring regenerative farming to the forefront. A reconditioned former farm shed, the restaurant is polished yet rustic, looking out to the surrounding native gardens, with a vegetable-forward menu joined by estate-reared lamb and beef and locally sourced seafood. Depending on seasonality and availability, this might translate to slices of oxheart tomato with smoked stracciatella and tomato leaf oil; Merguez sausage with pepper leaf and fermented ezme; or black Angus beef with smoked rosa bianca and green fig served with zucchini, kefir and wild fennel. Meanwhile, the estate's 800-strong orchard will see apples, pears, quince, peaches, nectarines, cherries, apricots and figs harvested for desserts, preserves and pastries.

Also on the Peninsula, an old faithful seaside spot has enjoyed a spruce up, spearheaded by incoming chef Matthew Knoops (ex-Pt Leo Estate). Poised on Yaringa Boat Harbour in Westernport Bay, **Cptn Jack's** has been given a menu refresh, retaining its seafood focus while adding a new Mediterranean bent. Dishes include spanner crab tagliatelle with confit tomato and pangrattato; wood-fired Skull Island prawns that come butterflied and doused in a chilli lime butter; and bluefin tuna crudo served with cucumber and ginger. There are also wood-fired flatbreads served with 'nduja, prosciutto, burrata or tomato and thyme.

> Tasmanian produce and French technique will anchor a menu that's also influenced by their homeland of Scotland.

## TASMANIA

Taking the place of Van Bone in Tassie's south-east is **Oirthir**. The Scottish Gaelic for "coast" pronounced along the lines of "oor-heid", the name nods to the fact both land and sea serve as inspiration for the husband-and-wife duo, Bob Piechniczek and Jillian McInnes. Tasmanian produce and French technique will anchor a menu that's also influenced by their homeland of Scotland. Chefs, owners and Tasmania newcomers, Piechniczek and McInnes are working closely with nearby producers – think Blue Lagoon Oysters from Boomers Bay, Tasmanian flour from Van Diemen's Stone Flour, Tongola goat's cheese and Bangor lamb. On the menu, a light dish of goat's curd, tomatoes and semi-dried tomato oil and consommé; Freycinet-sourced blue lip mussels with a zucchini kimchi and a beurre blanc sauce; or line-caught Port Arthur mackerel, cured and finished over the wood-fire and served with gooseberry chutney and Tasmanian wasabi. The wine- and whisky-focused drinks list nods to Apple Isle producers and the pair's Scottish heritage.

PHOTOGRAPHY ADAM GIBSON (OIRTHIR).

## BRISBANE

After opening to acclaim last year, Naldham House has welcomed the final puzzle piece to its multi-venue CBD hotspot. **The Fifty Six** brings dim sum, prawn toast and roast meat classics for a Cantonese extravaganza in stately quarters. Head chef Gerald Ong is gunning to evolve Brisbane's perception of Cantonese cuisine, bringing his deft skills from working in restaurants across Hong Kong including The Chairman. Modern one-bite starters approach traditional flavour profiles with snacky finesse, like the drunken prawn tart; and Harvey Bay scallops with house-made XO. Dim sum chef Ka Wai Kwok is overseeing the handmade menu, which includes scallop siu mei layered with whole prawn and pork mince; alongside soupy xiao long bao and crisp pork spring rolls. Queensland seafood is naturally showcased, including baked blue swimmer crab with calamansi; and Bay bug pao fan – a nod to chef Ong's Singaporean heritage – which is finished tableside with a rich broth. Bold interiors complement the elegant bones of the building, with arched windows, jewel tones, marble and brass finishes, booth seating and long tables.

Melbourne-based chef and restaurateur Shane Delia has debuted his first restaurant in the Sunshine State. Located in Brisbane's West End at the Thomas Dixon Centre – also home to the renowned Queensland Ballet – **Layla** delivers Delia's signature modern Middle Eastern brief, in keeping with his Melbourne restaurants Maha and Jayda. He's worked closely with head chef Simon Palmer (ex-Gerard's Bistro) to develop

**Clockwise from top: The Fifty Six's dining room; mango pudding with coconut chia; and head chef Gerald Ong.**

PHOTOGRAPHY DEXTER KIM.

**Clockwise from top: Avia's exterior; and interior.**

a menu hinged on aromatics and spices, generously designed to share. Kick off with Hokkaido scallops served with a carrot hummus and a black lime and toasted coconut sambal; or perhaps locally sourced quail fried and served with pistachio and tarator; then enjoy a wagyu shish with house-made harissa, native thyme and almond.

## SYDNEY

Settling into Darlinghurst near Taylor Square is **Avia**, a 60-seat restaurant from former Apollo chef Stefano Marano and front-of-house Jack Reid. The corner spot calls on Marano's experience working in both Australia and Italy, its name – the Latin for "grandmother" – a reference to his nonna, who sparked his passion for food. The menu spotlights lesser known pasta shapes like sedanini (a long ridged tube), bottoni (a filled button shape) and strascinati (an oversized orecchiette). Marano also makes his own salumi like capocollo (cured pork neck with fennel and pepper) and wagyu bresaola, and even a porchetta-inspired rolled lamb belly seasoned with a mushroom duxelle, which he's calling "lambetta".

The corner spot calls on Marano's experience working in both Australia and Italy, its name a reference to his nonna, who sparked his passion for food.

Nearby, **A.P Bread & Wine** is venturing into day-to-night territory at its new Darlinghurst outpost. By morning the sandstone cottage is home to croissant gelato affogatos; and an excellent ploughman's-inspired brekky plate replete with chunky sourdough, cheddar cheese, soft boiled egg, pickled green tomatoes and a side croissant with jam to tick both sweet and savoury boxes. Things switch over to "A.P eritivo" mode by night. The team's pastry and baking expertise is on show thanks to its ode to the vol-au-vent with green peas and an onion gravy; and masterful pâté en croûte; joined by a pasta crafted from leftover bread with anchovy and zucchini; an old-school jazzed-up beef rissole with peppercorn sauce and a fried egg; and a petit croque monsieur. To drink, there are batch-made cocktails and organic wines that dance from pink and macerated to a weighty whites list; plus house-made sodas and amaro.

**Clockwise from above: chef Fabio Delledonne shows Antoni Porowski and actor Justin Theroux how to make tortellini at Ristorante Belrespiro in Agazzano, Italy; and Porowski alongside Awkwafina.**

# DISHES OF DISCOVERY

## In this new series, Antoni Porowski explores the powerful family histories of A-listers, through food.

HAVING CARVED OUT HIS NAME AS THE ENDEARING foodie on *Queer Eye*, Antoni Porowski's next step is a culinary journey. In *No Taste Like Home,* Porowski – who is Canadian-born, New York-dwelling, with Polish heritage – teams up with *National Geographic* and a cast of celebrities for the new six-part series. "Food is one of those things, often in our everyday or periphery, that we don't really take a close look at, but what's so fascinating is it has this rich history," says Porowski.

In each episode, food isn't just devoured but put under a keen research lens, every dish or ingredient acting as a clue to each guest's heritage. When it came to scouting the six personalities for the series, it wasn't just about celebrity status. "We had a lot of talent that we considered. They didn't just go after the big names," says Porowski. "They wanted to make sure there were food-centric stories to be told." That said, the stars are certainly A-list, namely Florence Pugh, Justin Theroux, James Marsden, Issa Rae, Henry Golding and Awkwafina. Each goes on a quest to uncover details about their family histories though food, from Theroux enjoying tortellini en brodo in Italy's Bologna region; to Golding feasting on just-grilled fish with torched ginger in Borneo.

The project goes well beyond the scope of a typical food show, exploring how migration, colonisation, war, recessions and cultural shifts impact the everyday things we eat. Each element – from family lineage to the origins of dishes – was vetted by three independent sources, which meant months of painstaking research for each storyline.

"[Usually] I say a lot of things that aren't necessarily fact-checked, and I get in trouble on Twitter afterwards," admits Porowski, "but with *National Geographic*, everything I say has to be said with utmost certainty."

While the historical through line is integral to the series, there are also plenty of surprising and tender moments in each episode. "If you have a beating heart, you can't not get emotional," he says. "Food is emotional, and it's sustenance, connection, community and culture. But it also has this incredibly rich historical element. It's like a book."

Cue viewers all over the globe feeling inspired to explore their own history through this delicious lens. *No Taste Like Home is streaming now on Disney+.*

PHOTOGRAPHY NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC/SEONG JOON CHO (ANTONI & AWKWAFINA).

# THE STYLE VAULT

COULD THIS BE THE ULTIMATE ROAD TRIP WATCH? THE VERY FIRST CARRERA, RELEASED IN 1963 BY TAG HEUER, was inspired by the Carrera Panamericana – a notoriously dangerous five-day car race that roared along Mexican highways in a cloud of adrenaline and glamour. Key to the watch's original design was ultra-clear legibility even while cornering at speed; a gently thrilling notion that cemented its popularity among motorsports fans of the day. A pillar of the luxury Swiss watch brand ever since, the Carrera has evolved into various iterations, most recently this glittering chronograph, unveiled at LVMH Watch Week earlier this year. Practical for use while navigating the Australian roads on your next long weekend, its 83 diamonds and pearlescent alligator strap make it just as fitting for Champagne on arrival. *$12,950, tagheuer.com/au*

CARRERA
TAG HEUER
12
4
8
30
10
20
SWISS

PHOTOGRAPHY ALANA LANDSBERRY.

**Clockwise from left: Grill Americano's Martini; tableside tiramisù; bistecca alla Fiorentina T-bone; and restaurateur Chris Lucas.**

# GRILL CITY

## Restaurant royalty Chris Lucas announces upcoming Sydney launch.

GRILL AMERICANO'S BELOVED TABLESIDE TIRAMISÙ IS SET TO conquer Sydney this spring, with veteran restaurateur Chris Lucas announcing he will open a second chapter of the popular Melbourne grill in September. The Sydney CBD spot promises to scale up the original offering, with a larger dining room and kitchen, plus breakfast service – and broader appeal. "I know in Sydney, there's been a few grills open lately," says Lucas, "but I don't want it to be overly masculine."

Lucas is the powerhouse behind one of Australia's most established restaurant groups, comprising 10 Melbourne venues, plus outposts in Geelong and Canberra. This opening will mark the second Sydney venture for Lucas Restaurants, following the arrival of Chin Chin to Surry Hills in 2017.

Grill Americano Sydney will take up residence in the historic Qantas House building, better known as No. 1 Chifley Square, close to the sparkling Martin Place Metro. Interiors will be steered by wife Sarah Lucas and interior designer Samantha Eades of Mitchell & Eades, who also handled Grill Americano Melbourne and the newly opened Maison Bâtard.

The expansive restaurant will seat 160, and include two private dining rooms, plus a bar for 60. Sydneysiders can look forward to top-tier steaks, Josper-grilled veggies and a raw seafood bar delivered by polished servers in white jackets. Prime beef cuts will be the main star of the show, following the same signature preparation method as in Melbourne. An iced raw bar will satisfy Sydney's endless appetite for crudo and oysters, while four Josper grills will fire up all manner of steaks, vegetables and seafood. Grill Americano first opened on Melbourne's Flinders Lane in March 2022, captivating diners with its glamorous dining room and wood-grilled steaks, and earning a nomination for Best New Restaurant in *Gourmet Traveller*'s Annual Restaurant Awards.

PHOTOGRAPHY PETE DILLON (MARTINI,TIRAMISU & BISTECCA) & ALEXANDRA DREWNIAK (LUCAS).

## COME DINE WITH ME

Host a dinner with a difference this month and stand with people seeking asylum. Feast for Freedom is a DIY dinner party series that raises funds for the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (ASRC), an independent not-for-profit organisation empowering and supporting pathways for people seeking asylum. Register to receive a free Host Kit with recipes gifted by refugee cooks. Make those recipes or design your own menu, and invite guests to make a donation to the ASRC. *feastforfreedom.org.au*

**Don't miss *The Dirty Dozen*, a new exhibition tracing the history of Melbourne's street food by artist Kenny Pittock, curated by author Richard Cornish. From souvlaki to oysters, the free show immortalises Australian snacks as meticulously recreated ceramic art pieces, shedding light on the origins of our culinary habits. On now until August 29 at City Gallery, Melbourne.**

## SARTORIAL SNACKS

The eye-catching graphics of tinned fish packaging and the Melbourne hospitality scene act as inspiration for Naarm-based designer Sardine Supply. The unisex garments are designed for an oversized fit, made in Australia using GOTS-certified organic cotton, with the latest collection shot at hip bar and radio station Hope Street Radio. *sardinesupply.com*

## NEAT AND PETITE

Carting lotions and potions from haircare and skin regimen is never easy, whether it's dealing with liquid size limits or the inevitable leaky conditioner. Somi has arrived to mitigate that problem in a chic and sustainable way, with a series of tessellating containers ready to welcome every step of your beauty routine. From pump bottles to small jars, the 10 compartments will ensure your decanted goods arrive intact. It also comes with an array of labels so there's no chance of mistaking your shampoo for serum.
*$197, somi.com.au*

↘

## THREE TO TRY

**Stand mixers**

Long weekend baking is a piece of cake with these A-grade mixers.

**KitchenAid**

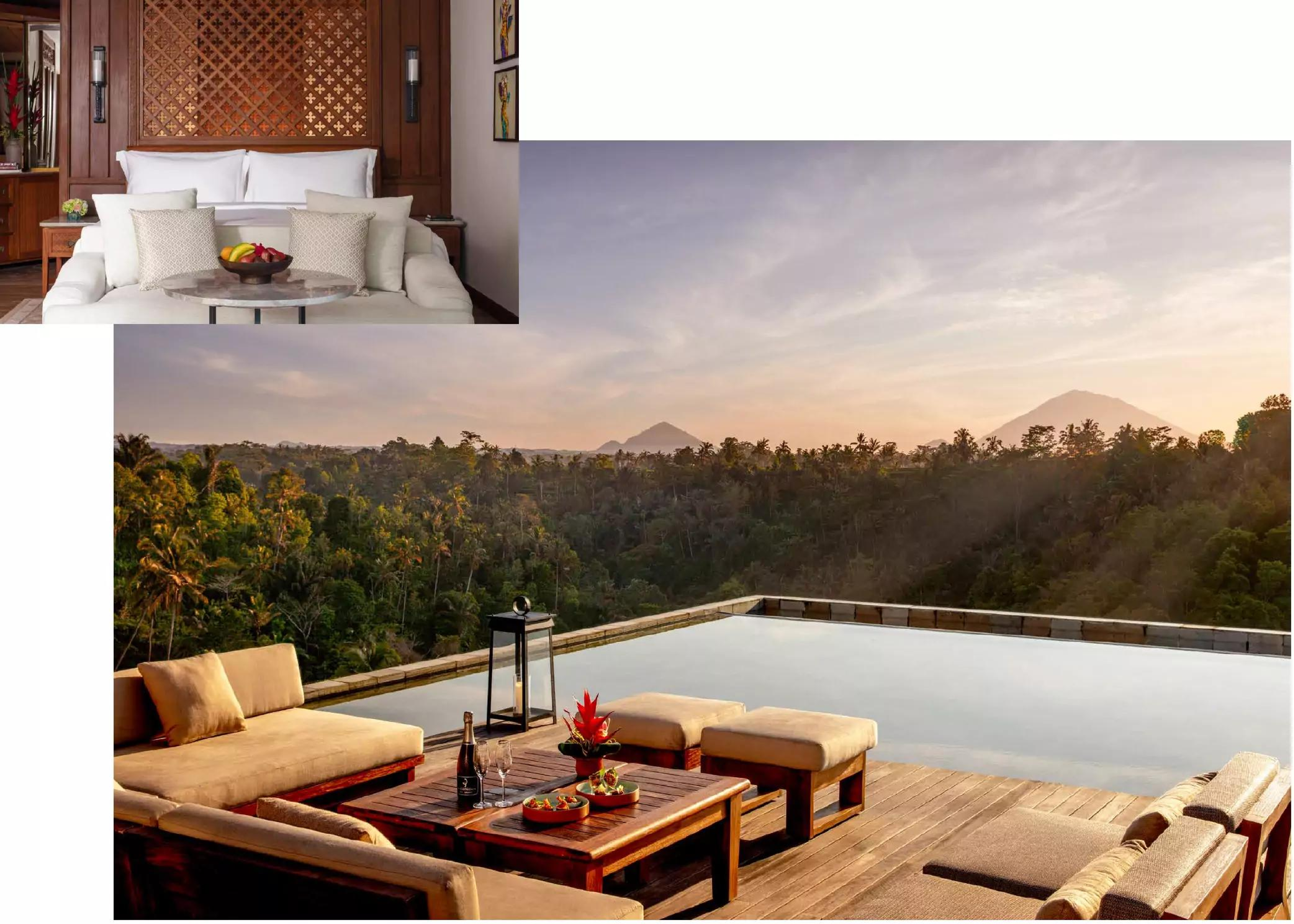
A benchtop benchmark for baking, this multi-tasker is a staple in any keen cook's home. The new butter colour ties in nicely with the return of DIY butter churning; and also whips cake batter, kneads dough and aerates egg whites with ease. *$1049, kitchenaid.com.au*

**Breville**

The Bakery Chef Hub bench mixer houses a mighty 1000W motor and full bowl coverage. With optional prep hub attachments that include a spiraliser, meat grinder and pasta cutter, this stand mixer is a kitchen tool as much as it is baker's friend. *$479, breville.com/en-au*

**Kenwood**

With capabilities to melt butter and prove dough the Titanium Chef Patissier XL takes your pastry game to a new finessed level. Features include built in scales, one-handed head lift and in-bowl illumination. *$1186, winnings.com.au*



**Clockwise from top left: inside a suite at Anantara Ubud; and poolside.**

# UBUD CALLING

## A serene mountaintop retreat recalls Bali's halcyon days in the island's spiritual heartland.

SENSES AWAKEN AT ANANTARA UBUD. THE NEWLY opened resort, high in the hills of Ubud's ancient Payangan region, is at Bali's spiritual and geographic heart – just a 20-minute drive from Ubud's bustling centre and less than three hours from the airport.

The sprawling new outfit from the luxury hotel brand opened in October 2024 after years-long delays, and it's been worth the wait. The result: a mountaintop jungle retreat that eschews common Bali clichés in favour of quiet luxury. Here, everything is calm, quiet and oh-so languid. As you ascend the mountain and snake down the lush frond-fringed driveway, arriving to the gentle drumming of the lobby's kinetic gong sculpture, it's clear this is a sanctuary – confirmed the next morning as you witness the sun rise from your plush king bed.

All 85 rooms overlook the rainforest canopy where Mount Agung – the island's highest peak – and active volcano Mount Batur rear their heads over the valley's ridge. Birdsong, hypnotic insect rhythms and misty plumes add to the magnetism of this place. Inside, neutral tones, woven tactile furnishings and rich local timber, including Balinese carved wood murals, assert Anantara's commitment to provenance.

Expansive one- and two-room villas cascade down the vale-like terraced rice paddies, accessed by a steep but scenic inclinator (acrophobes, beware), each with a cyan infinity pool that stretches end to end.

Over in the main building, suites start at 53 square metres and offer equally sublime views from comfortable balconies, though you'll have to venture to one of the hotel's two heated infinity pools for a dip.

Dining-wise, there are two on-site restaurants – the casual all-day Kirana and the more finessed Med-leaning fine-diner Amerta – along with two poolside bars primed for golden hour cocktails and snacks. Anantara Ubud is also loosely associated with nearby farm-to-table restaurant and conservation initiative Begawan Biji, where organic pan-Asian plates are backdropped by abundant gardens and rice fields.

A trip to the on-site spa is the sensible decision, while the fitness centre is decked out with TechnoGym equipment. The resort also offers outstanding cultural expeditions and activities, such as water purification rituals at one of Bali's oldest water temples; sound healing sessions; and hikes through the sacred forests and traditional villages.

Rooms start at $740 per night for Forest View suites and from $1350 for a One Bedroom Forest View Pool Villa. *anantara.com*

WORDS CORDELIA WILLIAMSON. PHOTOGRAPHY RICHARD WAITE (SUITE).

**Scenic has released its 2026 Grand Journeys, a series of 15 deluxe itineraries that combine ocean, river and land voyages. The journeys are a response to demand for seamless travel itineraries, bringing together the ultra-luxury portfolio of Scenic Eclipse Discovery Yachts and handcrafted land journeys in one premium collection. *scenic.com.au***

## AUSTRALIA ON A PLATE

South Australia continues to prove itself as Australia's festival state, with its most delicious offering, Tasting Australia, returning in May. The program for 2025 will see its centrepiece – the Town Square – presenting diverse shared dining experiences, while the Dining Galleries will host one-off dinners and masterclasses. New events include an afternoon of Lawn Bowls with chef Justin James at the Sturt Bowling Club; a table styling masterclass with Australian homewares brand In the Roundhouse; and Aperitivo Hour with appearances from some of Australia's best loved bars and chefs including Embla and Bar Heather. *tastingaustralia.com.au*

## DISHES AND DESTINATIONS

The *Gourmet Traveller* team share where they've been and what they're eating.

**Mengening Temple, Ubud, Indonesia**
Plunging under various water fountains was not on my bingo card for 2025, but undertaking a serene and spiritual water purification ritual at this lush and ancient water temple set the perfect holiday tone for my first trip to Bali. The sacred site was a tranquil sanctuary where I slipped instantly into bliss, enhanced by melodic bird calls and the surrounding frangipani trees. Yes, I ate up the whole *Eat, Pray, Love* moment. No notes.
*Cordelia Williamson, digital editor*

**Bathers' Pavilion, Balmoral, NSW**
Green strawberries are having a moment, cropping up on menus across Sydney. In the wrong hands, these tart little gems can cause lips to pucker, but Aaron Ward balances their bite perfectly, paired with coral trout and tangy tomatillo.
*Joanna Hunkin, editor*

**Island Radio, Sydney, NSW**
We never thought prawn toast needed a mix-up until we tried this clever iteration by chef Andy Wirya. Rotund chopped king prawns crown a flaky round of roti, served with a mighty chilli aïoli. A clever clash of the snack titans we can get behind.
*Jordan Kretchmer, news editor.*

PHOTOGRAPHY JOSH GEELEN/SOUTH AUSTRALIAN TOURISM COMMISSION (TASTING AUSTRALIA).

## ON THE PASS

# NATALIE MURPHY

**GLASS BRASSERIE, NSW**

We chat to the new head chef ushering the longstanding Hilton Sydney restaurant into a new era.

**Tell us about your path to becoming a chef.** My dad was a great home baker. He loved making classic treats like Monte Carlos and melting moments. I was always in the kitchen with him, helping out, and that's where my passion for cooking began. I was then lucky enough to land my first job as a pastry chef at Glass Brasserie. Within four years, I worked my way up to chef de partie, then after two years away, I came back as the head pastry chef. And after 12 years at Glass in 2024, I was promoted to chef de cuisine. It's been quite a journey, but this restaurant has always felt like home.

**Now you're in the top job, how are you putting your stamp on things?** I'm bringing a fresh perspective and a focus on simplicity. We're taking a more modern approach to dining, moving away from rigid course-style service in favour of a share-style menu that feels natural and effortless.

**What dish do you most enjoy sharing, from the current menu?** One of my favourites right now is our New Zealand salmon. We source it from Mount Cook in the Southern Alps, where the glacial waters create the ideal conditions for salmon to thrive, resulting in fish that's incredibly clean, rich, and perfect for serving raw or cured. We keep it simple, cured, with a touch of crème fraîche, dill and pickled onion.

**What's one of your favourite ingredients to cook with right now?** Pine mushrooms. They grow beneath pine trees and have this incredible meaty texture. We pickle them and pair them with our wagyu bresaola. They have such a unique flavour and work beautifully with red meat or pasta, especially in autumn.

*glassbrasserie.com.au*

## WHAT GT LOVES THIS MONTH

**Ironclad Jr by Ironclad Co**
These long-lasting, pint-sized cast-iron skillets are perfect single portions. Rustle up personal pies and chocolate chip cookies; or warming shakshukas and baked brie.
*ironcladpan.com.au*

**Medik8 Liquid Peptides**
Delivered in both a compact travel size or full bottle, this powerful hydrating serum can be popped on before a flight to keep skin supple and ready for landing.
*adorebeauty.com.au*

**Morning Market's hot cross buns**
The beloved grocer-café is baking buns this Easter, flavoured with Pastis, brandy and cardamom, and studded with prunes and apricots.
*morning.market*

**Friends With Frank**
Melburnians know how to dress for four seasons in one day so it's little wonder this Victorian brand's latest collection showcases impeccable trans-seasonal separates.
*friendswithfrank.com*

WORDS ALEXANDRA HARRIS (ON THE PASS). PHOTOGRAPHY PARKER BLAIN (MORNING MARKET) & TOM WHOLOHAN (MURPHY PORTRAIT).

# NEW CITY, OLD MATES

An Australian pub lands in NYC with proper parmas, pints and more.

AUSTRALIAN PUBS COME IN ALL FORMS. THERE ARE city institutions, beach town hangouts and country joints where the locals are practically part of the décor. Now, thanks to Eddy Buckingham, there's one in New York City, too. Old Mates is three levels of distilled Australiana, tucked inside a 19th-century building near the city's Financial District.

Buckingham, the Melburnian behind some of New York's buzziest restaurants (Chinese Tuxedo, The Tyger and SoSo's), has teamed up with Bluestone Lane founders Nick and Andrew Stone, and radio host Andy Lee to bring the vision to life.

"The concept of the Australian pub is very broad and varied, and you can't encapsulate what it means to all people in one venue," says Buckingham. "There's a real return to all the principles of old-fashioned pubs in Australia. And that's largely what inspires this place. The culture of hospitality, comfort, a relaxed approach – but with high standards." True to form, Old Mates nails it.

The middle floor channels classic pub energy: dark timber, worn-in corners and a bar stacked with Coopers alongside Smith's salt and vinegar chips. Upstairs, the Harbour Room shifts into bistro mode, while downstairs is "the naughty floor," primed for nightcaps and DJ sets.

The fit-out leans nostalgic without veering into kitsch. An original Ken Done hangs alongside Rennie Ellis prints that capture the sunshine of '70s and '80s Australia, as well as framed black and white photography of the nation's favourite chefs (like Matt Moran). "It's just so evocative of Australian culture and iconography," says Buckingham. "I've tried not to go too literal with it. There are no kangaroos, but it's a bit of fun."

Simon Drolz-Cox (formerly Dear Saint Éloise and 10 William Street) helms the kitchen, where pub fare includes chicken parmas; barramundi and chips; lamb chops with honey carrots; and linguine tossed with clams, prawns and calamari. There's even an Aussie "salad sanga," built on Bourke Street Bakery sourdough and buttered with Pepe Saya.

The drinks list features over 40 Australian wines, including Penfolds beside Grosset and Unico Zelo. Cocktails, named after homegrown hits, spotlight Australian drops: Flame Trees brings in Okar bitters, while Xanadu mixes Four Pillars olive leaf gin. Meanwhile, the beer selection covers all bases, with Coopers Pale Ale and Sydney Lager holding down the Aussie side.

Old Mates is all about giving Aussie expats in New York a proper taste of home, but the real play is winning over the locals. Buckingham is betting that a mix of straight-up hospitality and a bit of Aussie swagger will do the trick. *oldmates.com*

WORDS GEORGIE MEREDITH. PHOTOGRAPHY BRIAN ZAK.

Kylie Kwong celebrates the individuals helping to grow a stronger community. This month, we meet the president and director of Sharjah Art Foundation and artistic director of the 25th Biennale of Sydney.

# Hoor Al Qasimi

Hoor Al Qasimi is a global force for good, using art as a way to heal and connect. In her two-decade long practice, what shines through is her generosity of spirit in uniting the international community. Currently ranked as the most influential figure in contemporary art by ArtReview magazine, Al Qasimi champions visibility for marginalised voices while maintaining excellence in her curatorial programming and leadership roles.

Kylie Kwong

WORDS NICOLA CONVILLE (MAIN) & KYLIE KWONG (INTRO).
PHOTOGRAPHY MARK POKORNY (KYLIE KWONG) & CHIESKA FORTUNE SMITH (HOOR AL QASIMI).

IN 2002, WHEN ARTIST AND CURATOR Hoor Al Qasimi was just 22 years old, she was appointed director of the Sharjah Biennial. Today, she is a leading figure in the international art world. Al Qasimi is the president and director of Sharjah Art Foundation, which she founded in 2009, the artistic director of the sixth Aichi Triennale in Japan, and the artistic director of the 25th Biennale of Sydney, to be held in 2026. But despite her success, she remains remarkably humble and down-to-earth.

"I really looked forward to visiting the Sharjah Biennial when I was young, I would get so excited about meeting all the artists," Al Qasimi says from her office in Sharjah, in the United Arab Emirates. "I have always loved art – when I was at school I would skip other classes and sneak off to the art room."

It's a love that was nurtured early on, with her parents encouraging an appreciation for art and music in their children. The Sharjah Biennial began in 1993 when Al Qasimi was in her early teens, and she remembers going regularly, and being taken to exhibitions whenever the family went on overseas trips together.

Prior to finishing high school, Al Qasimi considered pursuing a career in architecture, however her art teacher dissuaded her, saying she would end up building towers in Dubai. "He told me 'You are an artist, you need to go to art school,'" she says. "Art school is very open and flexible, there are so many disciplines. I'm really grateful to my teacher for pushing me in that direction."

Al Qasimi went on to study at the Slade School of Fine Art in London. Upon graduating, she took some time off from her studies to visit Germany with her father. It was there she discovered *Documenta* – a contemporary art exhibition held every five years in the city of Kassel. It proved a life-changing experience.

"The exhibition really moved me. It felt urgent – I realised this exhibition was saying so much and I felt very strongly that Sharjah Biennial should be more like it," she recalls. "I came back to Sharjah with a lot of questions and ideas. The committee was made of up artists of an older generation and they said 'oh well, do it yourself' – so it became my job by default."

Al Qasimi threw herself into the role, working up to 20 hours a day, rallying other artists to help support her, learning InDesign so she could create brochures, and sweeping floors. "Because I went to art school, I know how to install and hang work, so I was running around with a spirit level," she laughs.

"Because I was a young woman, I knew people wouldn't take me seriously, even though I was working long hours. It's probably just recently after 22 years of doing it, I'm like, okay, maybe I don't need to prove myself. I can just do my job."

Al Qasimi has attended every Biennale of Sydney over the past decade and will relocate to Australia later this year to prepare for the 25th Biennale, which will take place from 7 March to 8 June, 2026. Having watched the festival develop, she is excited by the city's multifaceted cultures and perspectives, working with local artists and communities, as well as bringing new voices to the Biennale, and creating an inclusive space for everyone.

"In art school, they talked about nepotism within the art world and how difficult it is to be seen, so it's important for me to meet with as many artists as possible and share the platform," she says.

> "I have an opportunity to give space to people who might not have visibility."

"It's very interesting to see where the Biennale of Sydney lies in terms of the lives of everybody in the city. Is it something people are aware of? Do they know it's free? Is it something that engages with the public? I want it to be accessible and inviting for everyone, including children – I think that's really important," she adds.

With so much division and conflict in the world today, Al Qasimi says she is a strong believer in the power of art to connect and heal.

"The way I work is very global. I am always on the road and I'm really interested in conversations that connect people across oceans. I think people can feel so alone in their troubles and sorrows, but when they realise other people are going through similar issues, there's a solidarity or a comfort that comes with it," she says.

"I like to bring people together as much as possible, almost like a common ground. I'm in a place of privilege because I have an opportunity now to give space to people who might not have visibility. So that for me is very important – working with artists in Australia, but also across the globe." ●

*biennaleofsydney.art*

# Tahini

Nutty and versatile, sesame seed paste is a staple of Middle Eastern and Japanese cooking. Here, we showcase four of our favourites.

carwari
Wiser Choice for Better Life
Organic
BLACK TAHINI
Unhulled
Gluten Free
375g NET
hulled
TAHINI
ORGANIC
No added oil, salt or sugar
Dairy & gluten free
SPIRAL FOODS ORGANIC
NET 375g

WORDS JORDAN KRETCHMER. PHOTOGRAPHY ALANA LANDSBERRY. STYLING MAXWELL ADEY.

**Carwari organic black tahini**
Black sesame seeds have a slightly more complex and bitter flavour profile, which comes across pleasantly in this rich offering. Best used as the dramatic finishing touch to a dish or in baked goods.
*$10 for 375gm, harrisfarm.com.au*

**Spiral Foods organic tahini**
Hulled tahini – using sesame seeds whose outer husks have been removed – boasts a creamier flavour profile. This smooth paste is a perfect example, prime for making hummus or drizzling over grilled meats.
*$9.70 for 375gm, sunnybrookhealthstore.com.au*

**Yalla tahini dip**
While technically a dip (made from tahini paste mixed with lemon, vinegar and garlic), the light, fluffy consistency makes this easy to stir through salad dressings or enjoy with veggies or falafels.
*$6 for 200gm, onlinestore.wholefoodshouse.com.au*

**Al Kanater Tahini sesame paste**
This silky Lebanese-made example offers a rich and nutty taste thanks to its roasted sesame seeds. Of all the options we tried, this had the most robust flavour and comes in a convenient squeeze bottle.
*$8.20 for 330gm, lebanesegrocery.com.au*

*Aboard our business class private jet, embark upon a journey perfectly timed for Diwali.*
*Everything has been considered and included, from lavish palaces to revered monuments and exclusive events.*

THE SPIRIT & COLOURS OF INDIA BY PRIVATE JET

Delhi – Agra – Varanasi – Kolkata– Kochi – Udaipur – Jaipur – Delhi

Enjoy a sunset cruise along the Ganges before attending a private Aarti ceremony
Stay in opulent and palatial residences with unmatched views of India's icons
Float high above Jaipur during a spectacular sunrise hot-air balloon flight

EST. 1994
CAPTAIN'S CHOICE

*15 days, Delhi return, departing 27 October 2026, $53,900 per person, twin share*
*Discover our 2025 & 2026 Private Jet collection*
*1800 622 628  www.captainschoice.com.au/PrivateJet*

For full terms and conditions, see www.captainschoice.com.au/conditions.

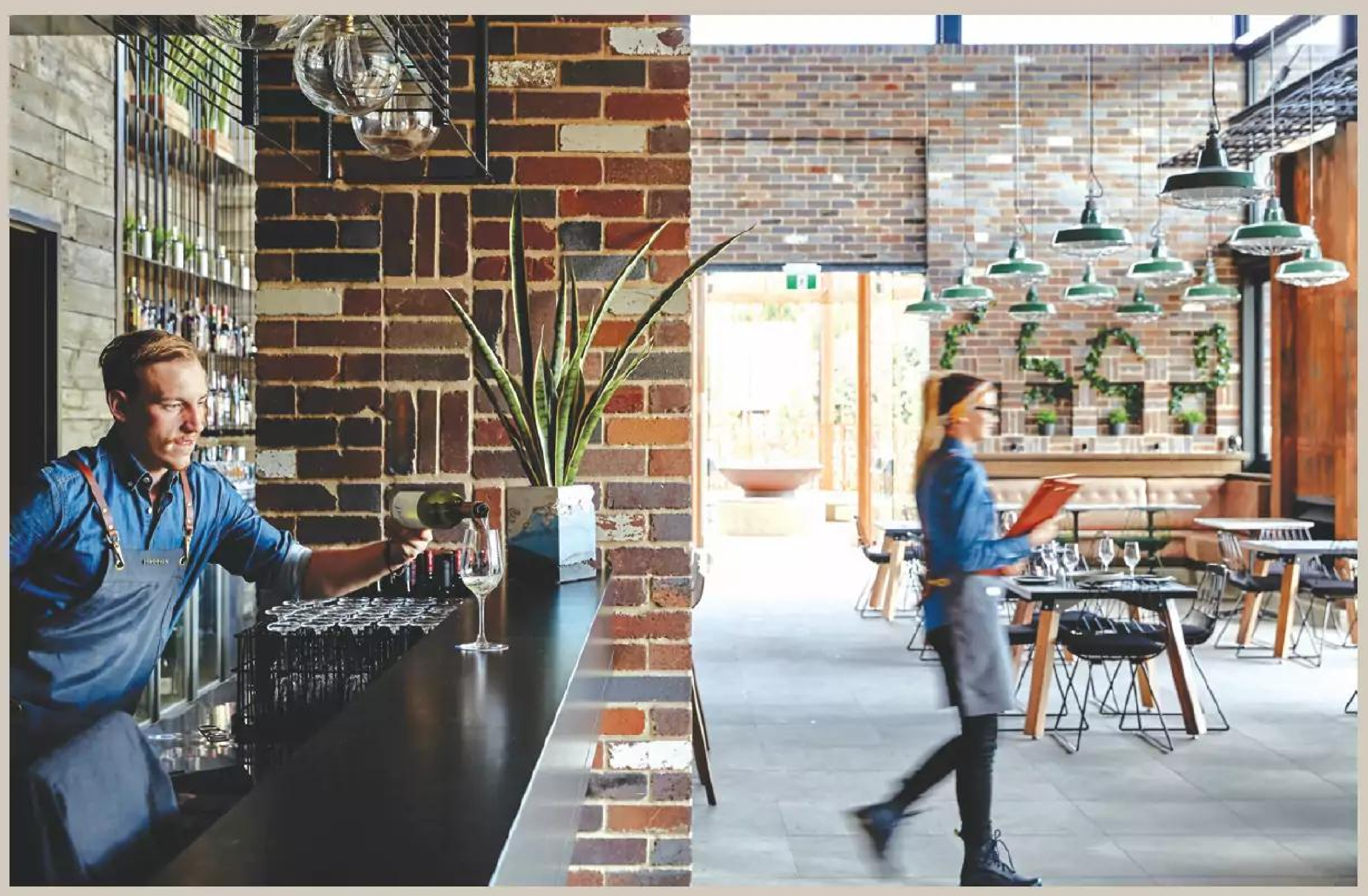
# JUNCTION
MOAMA

## Rich in heritage and abundant in local produce, Junction is a gathering place celebrating the region's finest.

Junction is a restaurant and bar located on the stunning Murray River in the picturesque Echuca Moama tourist district.

It's the ultimate escape – the perfect spot to enjoy sensational food, wine, cocktails and craft beer that showcases everything the region has to offer in a single, sophisticated setting.

DISCOVER THE REGION'S FINEST ·



**6 SHAW STREET, MOAMA NSW**

Thursday · from 5.30pm
Friday · from 5pm
Saturday · from 12pm – late
Sunday · 12pm - 5pm
Junction is an over 18 venue at all times.

Tel · 1800 806 777
Email · info@junctionmoama.com.au

JUNCTIONMOAMA·COM·AU

**The Bentley Group's sleek steakhouse**
PAGE 34

**French fare at Adelaide's Festival Plaza**
PAGE 37

**Fine food and vino in the Yarra Valley**
PAGE 38

**A cool new bar in Hervey Bay**
PAGE 40

# Review

Above: Bar Soma's dining room.

PHOTOGRAPHY SARAH CAMPBELL.

From left: confit duck leg girella, egg yolk, Comté sauce; chef-owner Brent Savage. Opposite: Eleven Barrack's dining room.

SYDNEY / WARRANG

# Eleven Barrack

The Bentley Group's new seafood and steak grill delivers a grand old time in one of Sydney's most stately dining rooms, writes **ALEXANDRA CARLTON.**

A SHINY PURPLE COLUMN slices through the centre of the room. There are floaty light fittings (one has a baseball hanging, inexplicably, from its base), angular vases and gilt-framed horse paintings. A grand piano. Mirrored, sparkly, dangly things. It's all strewn around the classical bones of what was once an 1850s bank, so there's also marble columns, Tasmanian oak panelling and a six-metre carved plaster ceiling. Tied together with tartan carpet, Eleven Barrack looks like a Scottish castle where the laird's glamorous great-niece has taken over for a house party.

The décor at the new steak and seafood grill from the Bentley Group's Brent Savage and Nick Hildebrandt, is the work of their long-time collaborator, interior architect Pascale Gomes-McNabb, and this is her most enjoyable effort yet. It certainly gives you plenty to look at while you're sliding delicate ricotta puffs and serious steak onto your plate.

"Delicate" and "serious" are through lines on the menu. In contrast to the marquess-gone-mad room, the food at Eleven Barrack is probably the team's most restrained. It follows a classic grill format: appetisers (including a luxurious seafood platter), starters, pasta and mains. Then you hit the headliners: shareable meats like coal-roasted Murray cod in tangy green garlic sauce, pork tomahawks and five steaks, including a butter-soft F1 wagyu T-bone in Café de Paris and jus.

The bay lobster is a strong opener. Gems of shellfish are arranged in a cut-crystal coupe, layered with dashi jelly and savoury custard. I'm pleased to see that ploughman's platter favourite, piccalilli, make an appearance on a potato tart, though I could've done with more of the puckery relish. A better potato investment is a shattery-crisp skin stuffed with pommes purée and jigged up with mustard and crème fraîche. It's got a cult-dish feel to it: the potato you have when you can't decide between chips or mash.

The culinary somersaults that characterise the group's other venues, like the playful fish finger bao buns from King Clarence or the subversive hot sauce duck burger from Monopole, are mostly absent (though you can get a slightly madcap croissant hot dog at Eleven Barrack's bar).

Instead this is expert, refined cooking designed to be eaten your way. Want to settle in for four voluptuous courses? Go for it. A bowl of mafaldine and a glass of delightful Pícaro del Aguila rosé? Of course.

Eleven Barrack might be doing straight-laced things on plates but I think even a Scottish heiress would have a grand time here.
*bentleyrestaurantgroup.com.au*

11 Barrack St,
Sydney, NSW

**CHEFS**
Brent Savage,
Aiden Stevens and
Niro Richards

**OPENING HOURS**
Lunch Mon-Fri;
Dinner Mon-Sun

**PRICE GUIDE**
$$$

**BOOKINGS**
Recommended

PHOTOGRAPHY MURRAY FREDERICKS (INTERIORS).

"Delicate" and "serious" are through lines on the menu. In contrast to the marquess-gone-mad room, the food at Eleven Barrack is probably the team's most restrained.

From left: Station Road's bar seating; and hand-picked mud crab, preserved chilli, betel leaf and blood lime. Opposite: the dining room.

ADELAIDE / TARNDANYA

# Station Road

French fare with a redeveloped Festival Plaza view lands in Adelaide's CBD, writes **KATIE SPAIN**.

A CHAMPAGNE CART IS THE spiffy scene-setter for this sleek new addition to Adelaide's Festival Plaza. Beverage director Mathieu Smeysters rolls between tables, accompanying Louis Roederer and rare grower Champagne with a side of storytelling – a great way to kick off a meal in Adelaide's CBD.

When Station Road opened in late 2024, the French-inspired bistro was just what the newly developed Festival Plaza needed. Four months on it's the place to be seen. From Wednesday to Saturday, city workers drop in for moules frites, part of a French Classics lunchtime series, dipping crisp fries in Port Lincoln mussels swimming in white wine and cream broth. Later, a crowd pops in for snacks after a show at the Festival Centre or before events at Adelaide Oval.

With capacity for 110 indoor and 140 outdoor, there's plenty of space. Inside, bar seating overlooks the kitchen where head chef Baine Stubbs (ex Vue de Monde) and the team assemble snacks. Hand-picked mud crab arrives atop a betel leaf, wrapped around the bite-sized medley of blood lime and preserved chilli. A slow-cooked egg, yolk separated and gently warmed in the shell, is finished with Leatherwood honey and piped smoked cream, and accompanied by a tiny spoon. The medley of Leatherwood honey and smoked cream are as balanced as the restaurant's aesthetic; subtle, classy and comforting. Tasmanian sea urchin draped across an omelette sphere is an alluring mouthful.

Lean into larger plates that scream France (riffs on Asian flavours are less enamouring). Tender Abelsway Farm chicken breast (brined in a salt solution, poached in butter at 60 degrees) and confit leg is beautifully executed, as are the baby vegetables poached in butter, salt, thyme, bay leaves, peppercorn and shallot. Rich Southern Rock lobster cannelloni begs to be shared, as do traditional desserts by Parisian-born pastry chef Rosanna Petit (ex Van Bone) who champions Paris-Brest and rum baba heaving with cream and Planteray rum.

Smeysters co-owns Station Road with the crew behind East End Cellars and Mother Vine and his global wine reach is all over the drinks list, from Adelaide Hills' J & S Fielke Pinot Noir to Portugal's Henriques & Henriques Madeira Sercial.

Drinks and snacks are on until late Wednesday to Saturday. A cheese trolley with French and local Section 28 cheeses bookends the experience. A fitting fromage finale for a bistro encouraging cork pops night and day.

*stnrd.com.au*

Festival Tower,
Station Rd,
Adelaide, SA

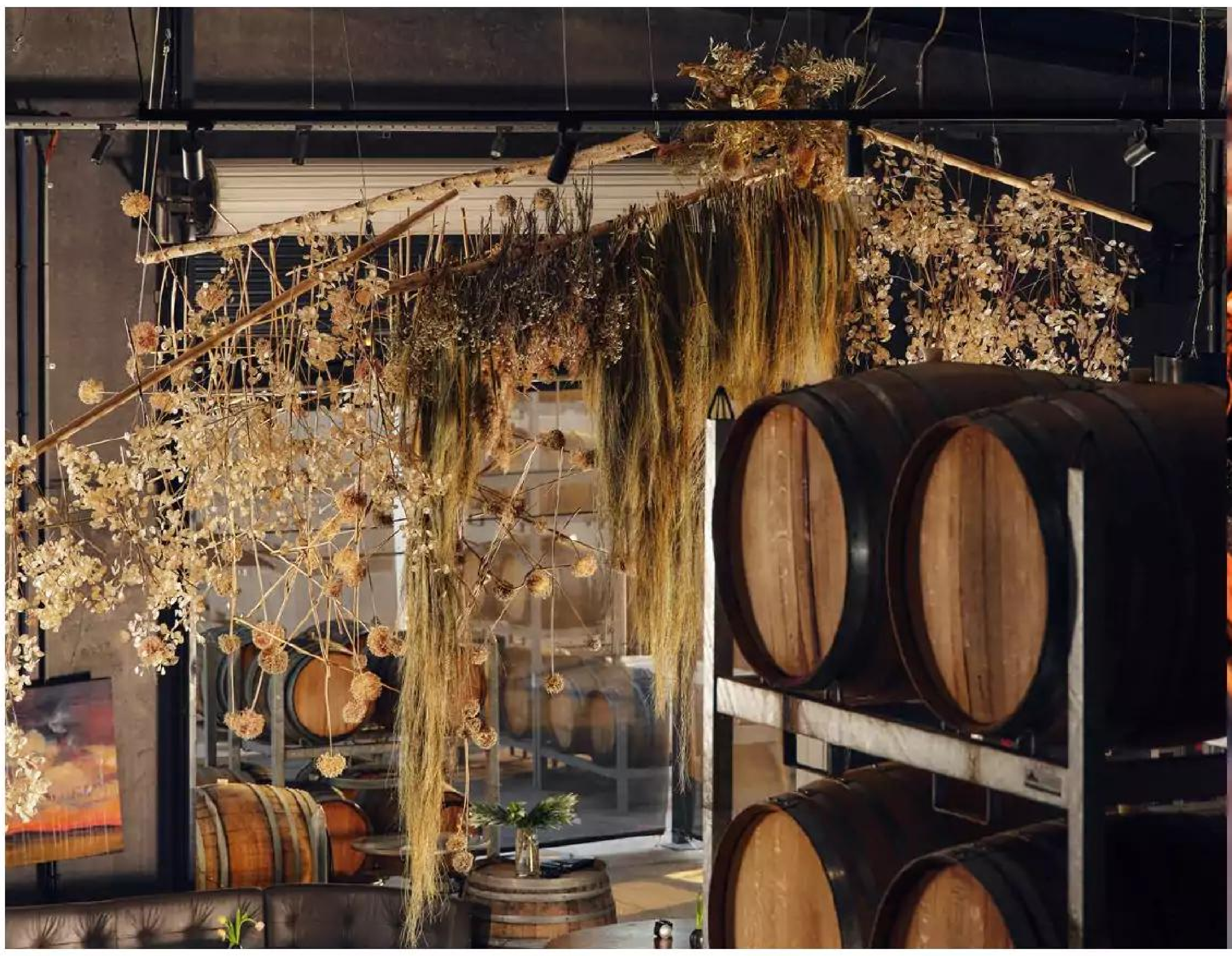
**CHEF**
Baine Stubbs

**OPENING HOURS**
Lunch Wed-Sun;
Dinner Tue-Sat

**PRICE GUIDE**
$$

**BOOKINGS**
Recommended

PHOTOGRAPHY JACK FENBY.



From left: Jayden Ong Winery & Cellar Bar; a selection of char-grilled skewers. Opposite: Jayden Ong.

HEALESVILLE / WURUNDJERI

# Jayden Ong Winery & Cellar Bar

This excellent winery's food offering is on par with its vino, writes **MICHAEL HARDEN.**

IT WOULD BE PERFECTLY legitimate to visit Jayden Ong Winery & Cellar Bar just for the wine. Ong, a co-founder of Cumulus Inc in Melbourne, is a talented winemaker who produces four ranges of impressively elegant, clean-lined wines at his winery on the outskirts of the Yarra Valley's Healesville. You could taste, buy and leave happy, but to miss the Cellar Bar aspect of the equation would be short-changing yourself.

Entering the space, it's clear the bar is no afterthought. This is a working winery with the bulk of the warehouse-like space set aside for that. The bar at the front with its umbrella-shaded outdoor seating and darkly glamorous indoor area overhung with large sculptural arrangements of dried plants and flowers has its own atmosphere, both calming and elegant. It also has an excellent menu of wine-friendly food, much of it cooked over charcoal, all of it designed with flexibility in mind.

Besides Jayden Ong's wines, a good selection served by the glass, the drinks list also offers cocktails, beer and a decent no-alcohol section, ideal accompaniment for char-grilled skewers – whole Skull Island prawns teamed with classic Marie-Rose-type sauce, for example, or mushrooms with aïoli and porcini salt – or a not-to-be-missed chicken skin sandwich, the crisp smoky shards of skin joined by fluffy white bread, cucumber and mayo. Think carefully before agreeing to share that one.

Larger dishes emerge from the kitchen with a similar elevated simplicity. Meticulously boned and filleted tiger flathead gets support from a sweet-and-salty caper and raisin vinaigrette while a big-flavoured waygu tri-tip, perfectly cooked to medium rare, adds wonderful garlic butter and a bed of diced brassica florets to the mix.

Sides like a superb panzanella, deftly dressed and bright with heirloom tomatoes, and textbook fries serve equally well as snacks, should you be here for drinks. For those going the full dine, desserts like a pale green fig leaf pannacotta teamed with raspberries, poached rhubarb and a shortbread crumb or a dark chocolate mousse with brandied plums will close the meal very successfully.

Just 90 minutes from Melbourne, Jayden Ong Winery & Cellar Bar is an easy day trip. But, like coming here only for the wine, an overnighter that would allow a more thorough study of Ong's deft winemaking alongside very appealing food, is an option worth serious consideration.
*jaydenong.com*

8 Hunter Rd,
Healesville, Vic

**CHEF**
Alex Robinson

**OPENING HOURS**
Lunch Fri-Sun;
Dinner Fri-Sat

**PRICE GUIDE**
$$

**BOOKINGS**
Recommended

You could taste, buy and leave happy, but to miss the Cellar Bar aspect of the equation would be short-changing yourself.

From left: baked scallops with toum butter; baked prawns, makrut coconut curry and lime; owner Timo van Hest.

HERVEY BAY / BUTCHULLA

# Bar Soma

More than three hours north of Brisbane, this tiny wine bar is proving well worth the drive, writes **ELLIOT BAKER**.

HERVEY BAY MAY BE KNOWN as the world's whale-watching capital, and its scallops are appearing on menus across Australia, but there's more to this laid-back coastal city than stunning cetaceans and prized molluscs. Bar Soma, a cosy 22-seat wine bar in Scarness, is proving just that.

Scallops are on the menu, of course. While not local this visit, they're still excellent – served in the shell and swimming in garlicky toum butter. They're outshone, just, by grilled split prawns nestled in a fragrant coconut curry sauce enhanced with makrut lime.

Since opening in 2022, Bar Soma has brought a modern edge to Hervey Bay's dining scene. The arrival of head chef Mitchell Chambers (ex-Exhibition restaurant) has introduced a freewheeling approach to the menu, drawing inspiration from the Middle East, Thailand and Italy. But cuisine isn't the focus here; deliciousness is.

Take some freshly shaved mortadella, drizzled with mandarin hot honey and served with house pickles. Or labneh, topped with marinated capsicum and doused in a fiery sauce made from biber salçasi (Turkish red pepper paste). It doesn't take long to realise that Chambers has a way with sauces – they're balanced, punchy and addictive. House focaccia is the perfect vessel to mop up every last drop.

Like the food, the wine list resists rigid categorisation. In such a regional location playing it safe would be easy, but owner Timo van Hest champions lo-fi producers from around the world, with a focus on lesser-known varieties and regions.

His advice is worth seeking out: a viscous dessert wine from Beechworth's Castagna complements a sticky date pudding topped with barley cream, while a Spanish moristel from Bodega Pirineos proves the perfect chilled red for a balmy summer evening.

The latter cuts through the richness of a 400-gram sirloin, served with Chambers' take on Diane sauce. The addition of muhammara (a roasted red pepper Levantine dip) lends it a spicy, smoky edge. It comes with a side of butter lettuce, with a savoury yeast and miso dressing, and scattered with a salty crumb of fried chicken skin and quinoa. An unexpected highlight.

It seems Hervey Bay is witnessing exponential growth, with a 223-room five-star hotel on the way and direct flights recently introduced. There's more to this coastal city than meets the eye, and Bar Soma seems to be hitting its stride at just the right time. *barsoma.com.au*

5/346 Esplanade,
Scarness, Qld

**CHEF**
Mitchell Chambers

**OPENING HOURS**
Lunch Sat-Sun;
Dinner Wed-Sat

**PRICE GUIDE**
$$

**BOOKINGS**
Recommended

PHOTOGRAPHY SARAH CAMPBELL (FOOD) & RENEE GREEN (TIMO VAN HEST).

# GOURMET TRAVELLER

## READER DINNER

TICKETS ON SALE NOW

# ELEVEN BARRACK

11 Barrack Street, Sydney

*with* **JOANNA HUNKIN**

Editor, *Gourmet Traveller*

**Wednesday 18 June, 6.30pm**

Join us at Sydney's most glamorous new dining room as we dine on an exclusive menu prepared by co-owners, executive chef Brent Savage and sommelier Nick Hildebrandt.

Tickets $175 per person, three courses with paired drinks.

PRESENTED BY

ABERCROMBIE & KENT

**BOOK NOW**

Scan the QR code or visit gtreaderdinnerventbrite.com.au

**ENQUIRIES**

rsvpgt@aremedia.com.au

**ON ARRIVAL**

*Mandarin Spritz*

**TO START**

AP's baguette with cultured butter

Raw kingfish, salted green apple and crème fraîche

Smoked pastrami, capers, parsley and horseradish

*2024 Clarence House Estate Pinot Blanc, Tasmania*

**MAINS**

Poached blue-eye, mousseline, chive butter sauce

Southern Ranges smoked short rib, red wine jus

Green leaf salad with chardonnay vinaigrette

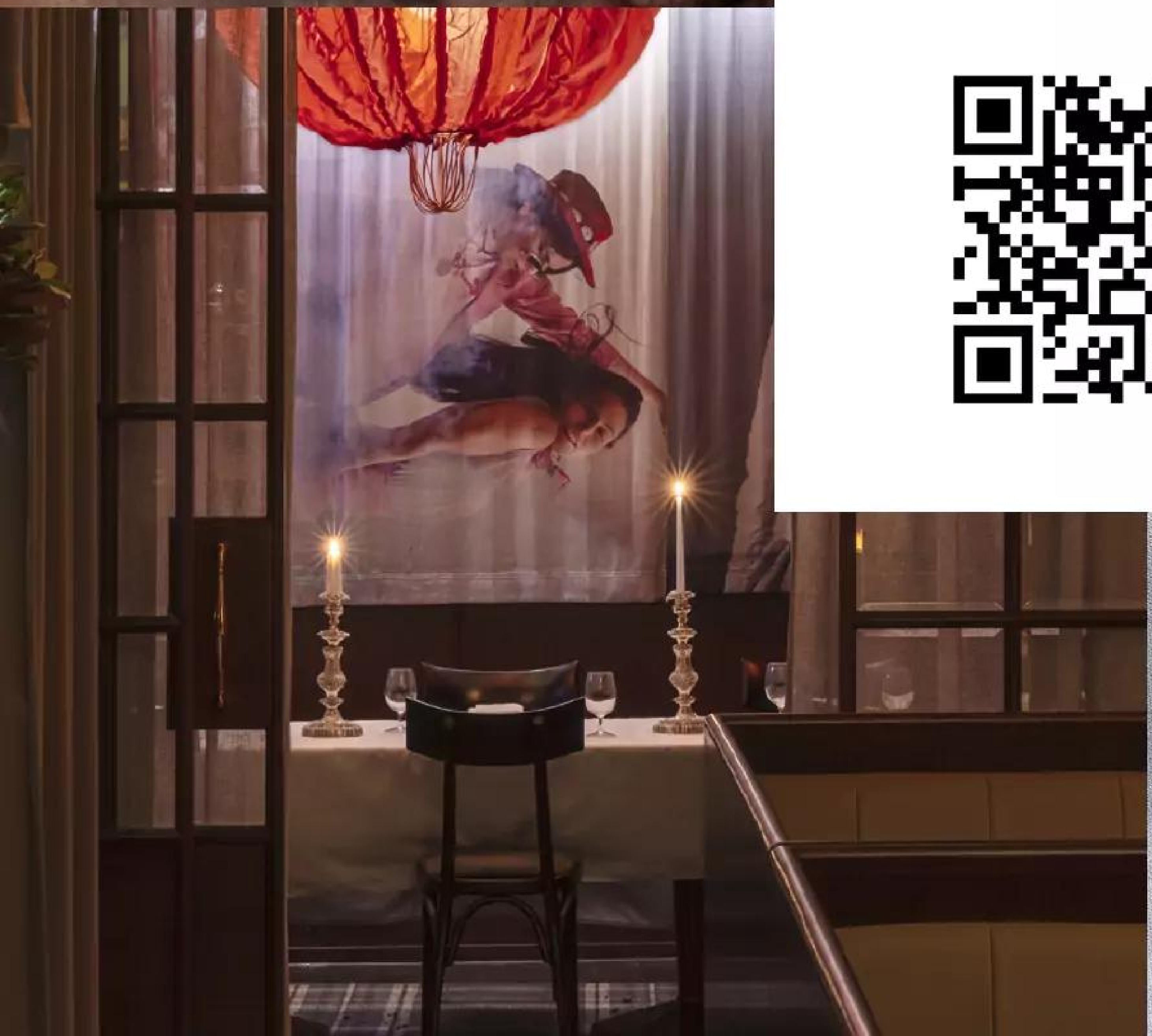
Barrack seasoned fries

*2021 Domaine de la Pigeade Ventoux Rouge, Rhone Valley*

**TO FINISH**

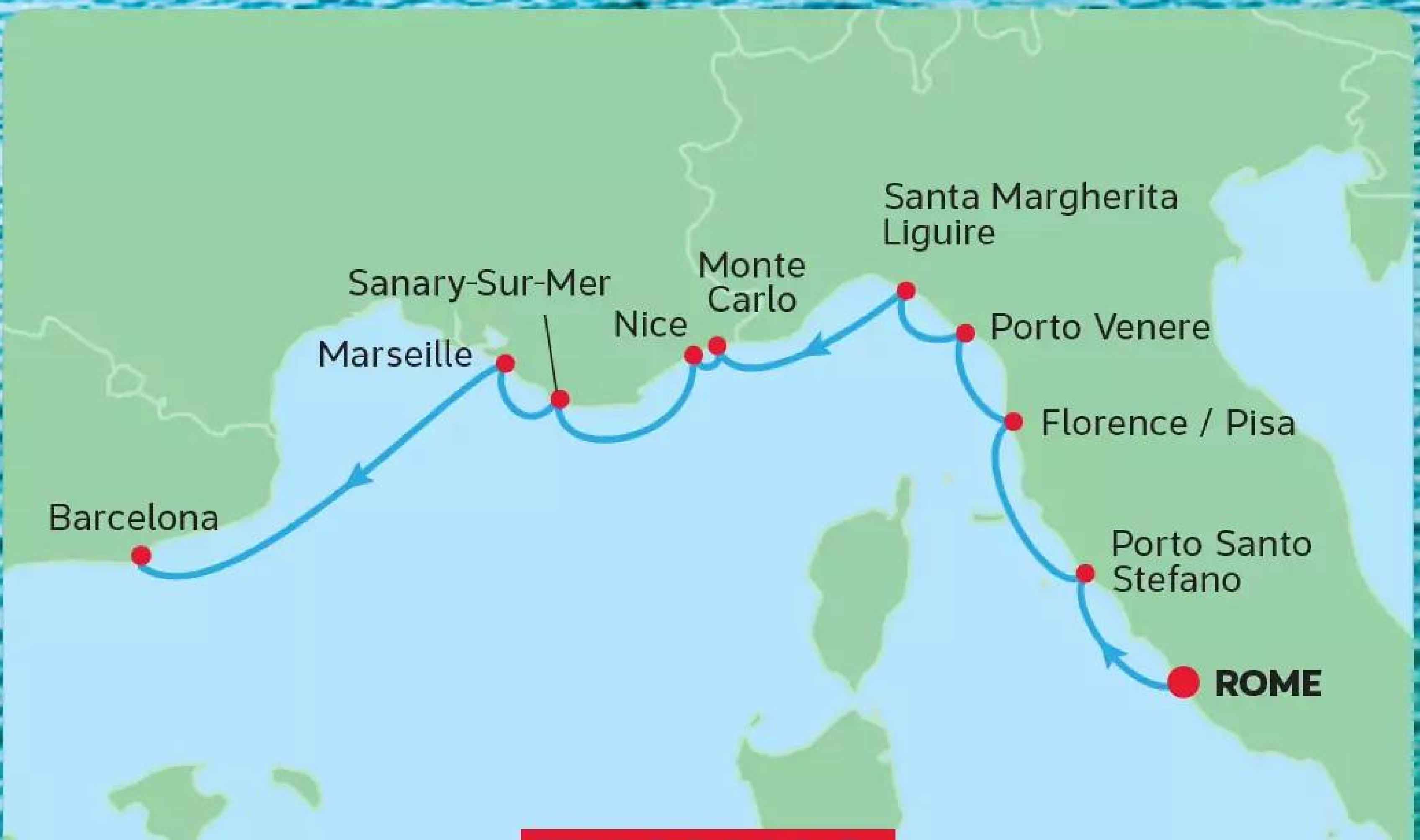
Layered dark chocolate cake with Armagnac macerated prunes

*Red Mill Rum 'Eleven Barrack'*



# CRUISE IN LUXURY

## BOOK NOW & SAVE UP TO $9000*


Santa Margherita Liguire
Sanary-Sur-Mer
Monte Carlo
Nice
Porto Venere
Marseille
Florence / Pisa
Barcelona
Porto Santo Stefano
ROME

### ITALIAN & FRENCH RIVIERAS

**EXCLUSIVE OFFER***

15-night stay and cruise holiday with Azamara Cruises

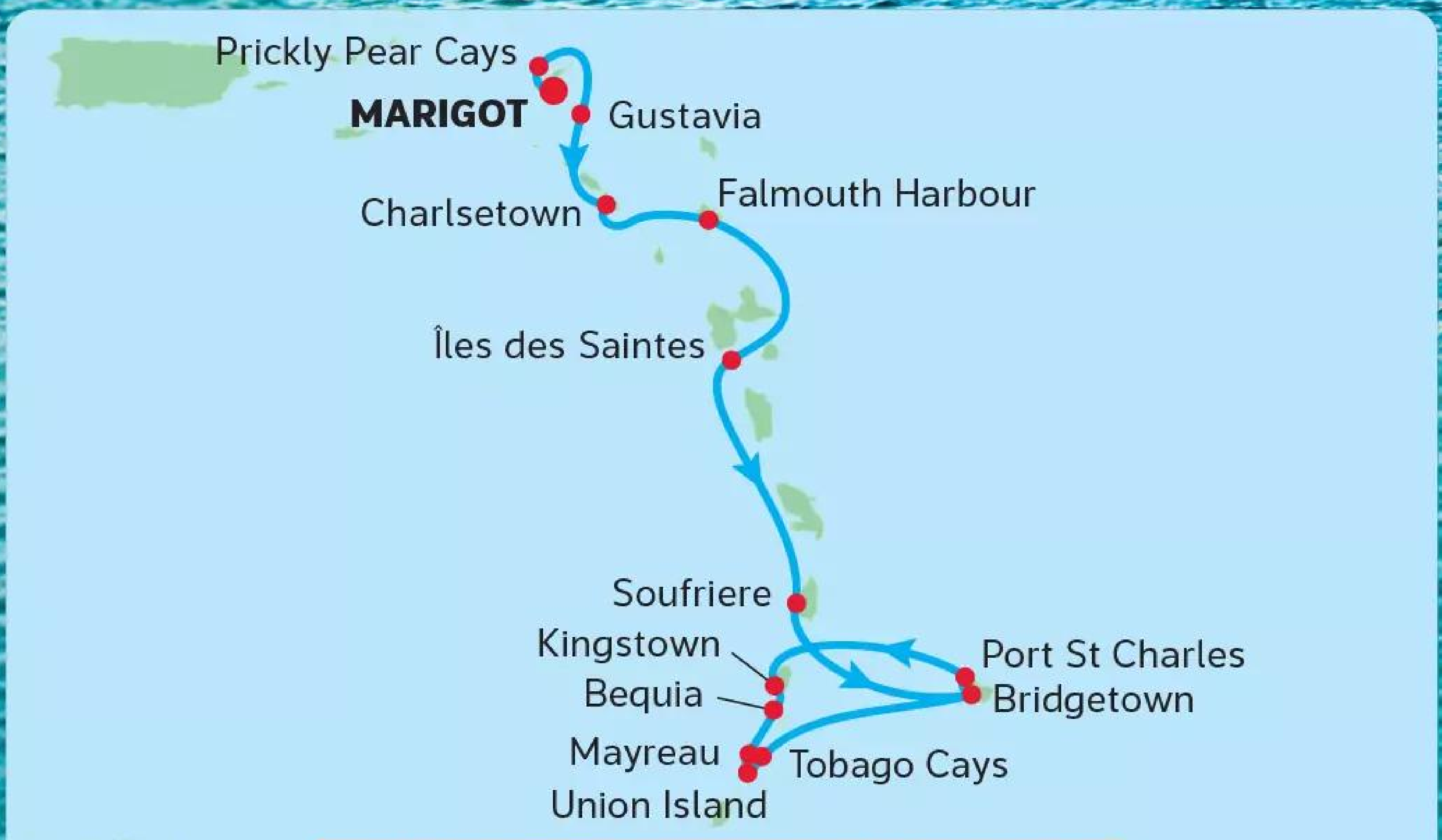
⇄✈ 🚢 11 🛏 4 🍴 ★ 📷

- ✓ Return economy flights to Europe*
- ✓ 11-night luxury Azamara cruise from Rome onboard *Azamara Onward*
- ✓ 2-night pre & post stay in central city hotels

FROM **$7199*** PER PERSON

*Departs 26 Aug 25. Deal 20284127*

**ADD** flights **+** insurance to **Bundle+SAVE $500**


Prickly Pear Cays
MARIGOT
Gustavia
Charlsetown
Falmouth Harbour
Îles des Saintes
Soufriere
Kingstown
Port St Charles
Bequia
Bridgetown
Mayreau
Tobago Cays
Union Island

### EASTERN CARIBBEAN & GRENADINES

**EARLYBIRD SAVE UP TO $9000***

14-night Emerald cruise from Saint Martin onboard *Emerald Azzurra*

🚢 14 🍴 🍸 ★ 📷

- ✓ Set sail to Saint Kitts, Antigua & Barbados in luxury
- ✓ Welcome & Farewell Reception with dinner
- ✓ **Upgrade** to a balcony suite from **$5225***

FROM **$9345*** PER PERSON

*Departs 13 Mar 27. Deal 20330895*

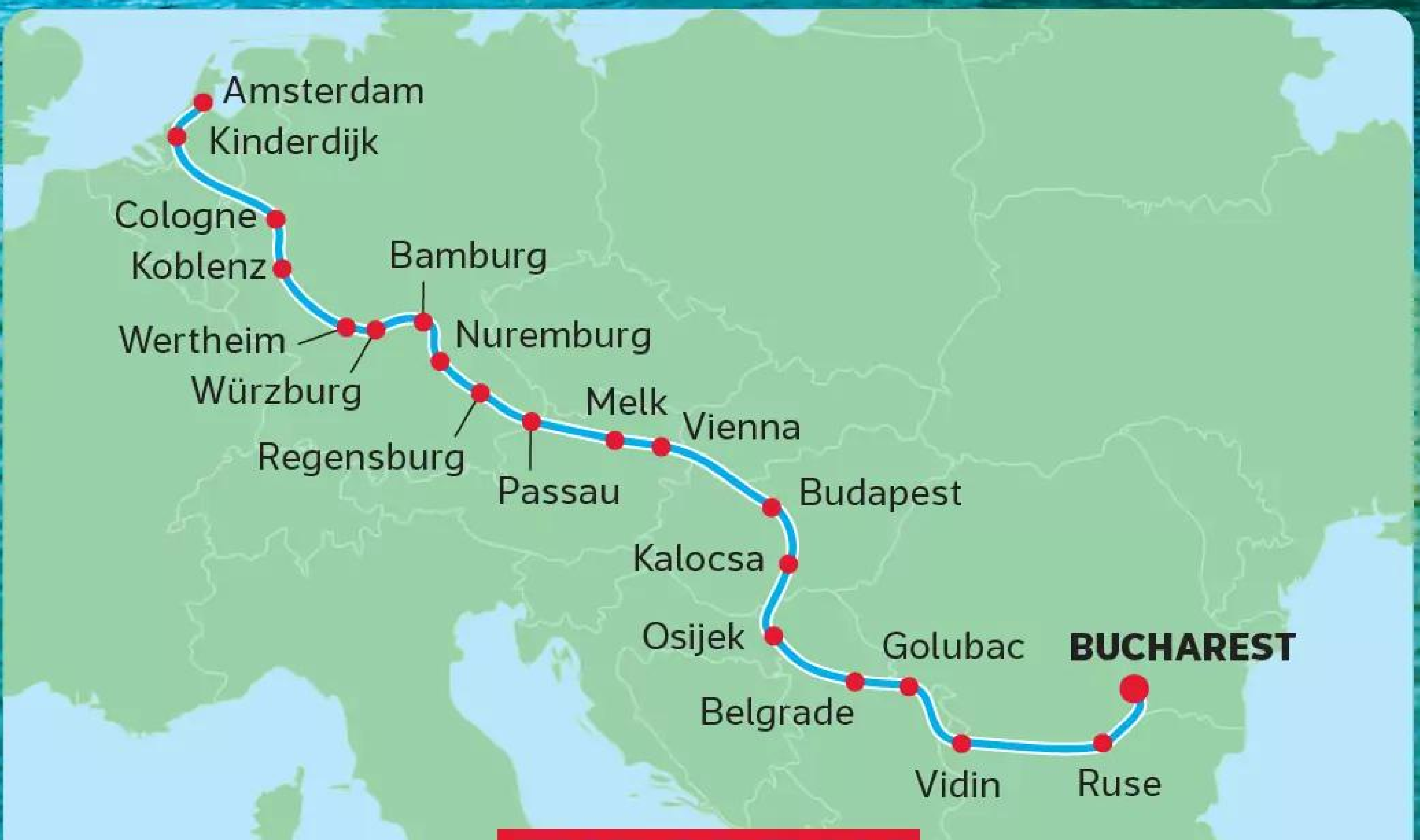
**ADD** flights **+** insurance to **Bundle+SAVE $500**

Trustpilot ★★★★★ 22,000+ reviews

**FLIGHT CENTRE**®
Your centre for **travel.**

**Subscribe for exclusive deals & expert travel tips**

*__*Travel restrictions & conditions apply.__ Prices & taxes are correct as at 7 Mar 25 & are subject to change without notice. Prices may vary based on demand and availability. A search for availability will return the supplier's current live price on the lowest fare available on your search date. This may be different from the Advertised Price if it has been varied by the supplier since being advertised by Flight Centre. Visit our website to see updates & corrections to advertised products at http://www.flightcentre.com.au/ads. Prices quoted are on sale until 30 Apr 25 unless otherwise stated or sold out prior. Prices quoted are per person, twin share (unless otherwise stated). Advertised price includes any saving amounts and/or bonus nights. Offers are subject to availability. Seasonal surcharges & blackout dates may apply depending on date of travel. Additional fees, including surcharges & visa fees specific to your departure date or flight routing, may apply. Payments made by credit card will incur a surcharge. Advertised prices shown are for payments made by cash in store only. Advertised prices are for products booked with Flight Centre retail consultants within Australia. Pricing may vary if you are booking with a Flight Centre Independent travel consultant as they operate as independent businesses and determine their own pricing. __AIRFARE NOT INCLUDED UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED. BUNDLE+SAVE:__ Book and pay instore*


Amsterdam
Kinderdijk
Cologne
Koblenz
Bamburg
Wertheim
Nuremburg
Würzburg
Melk
Vienna
Regensburg
Passau
Budapest
Kalocsa
Osijek
Golubac
BUCHAREST
Belgrade
Vidin
Ruse

## EUROPEAN SOJOURN

**SAVE UP TO $2400***

22-night Viking cruise from Bucharest onboard *Viking Lif*

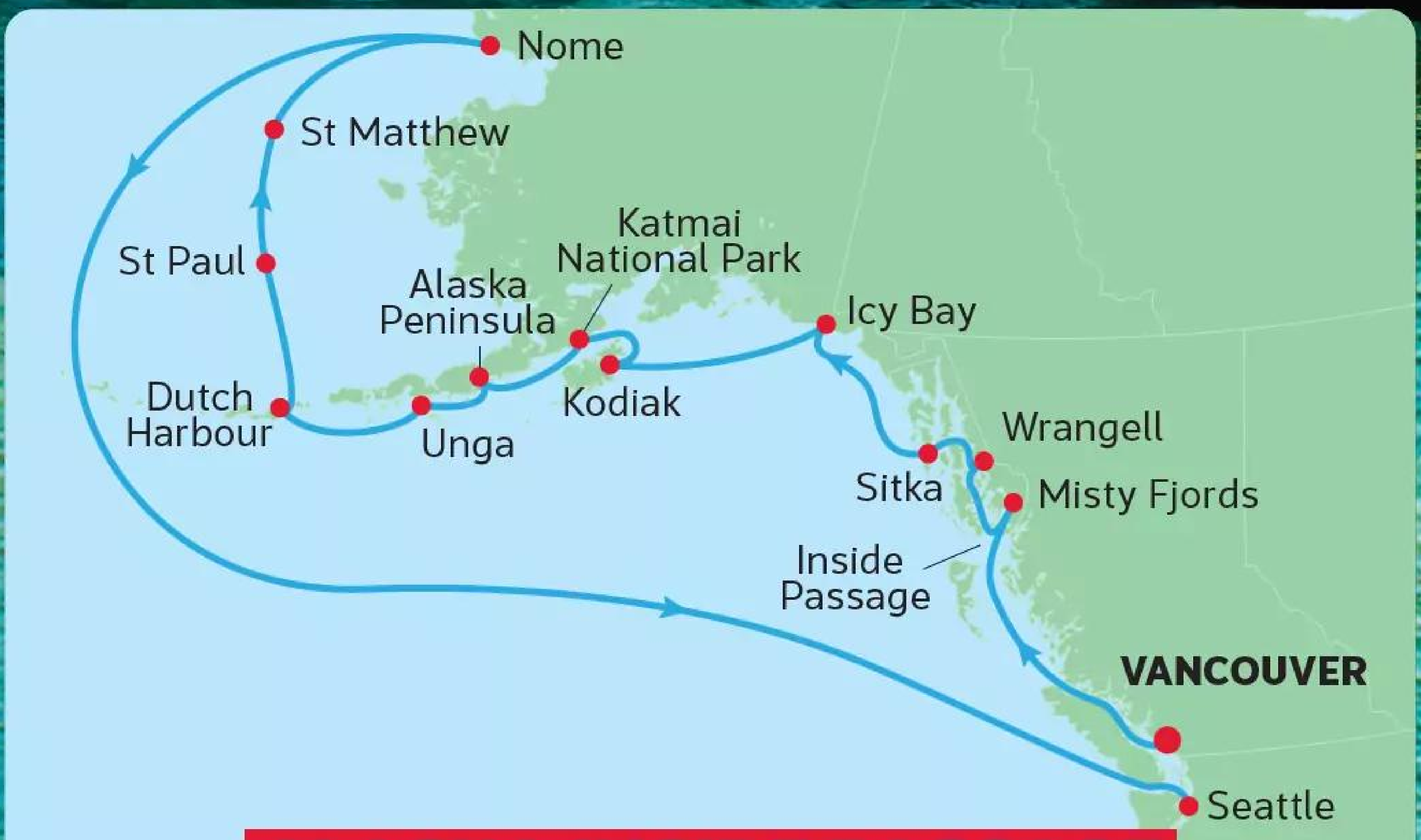
🚢 22 🍴 🍸 ★ 📷

- ✓ **EXCLUSIVE $400* onboard credit**
- ✓ Shore excursions included in **19 ports of call**
- ✓ Gourmet meals pair with wine, beer & more!

FROM **$11595*** PER PERSON

***Departs 21 Jul 26. Deal 20359597***

**ADD** flights **+** insurance to **Bundle+SAVE $500**


Nome
St Matthew
St Paul
Katmai National Park
Alaska Peninsula
Icy Bay
Dutch Harbour
Kodiak
Unga
Wrangell
Sitka
Misty Fjords
Inside Passage
VANCOUVER
Seattle

## ALASKA INSIDE PASSAGE & BRITISH COLUMBIA

**EXCLUSIVE ONBOARD CREDIT***

18-night stay & cruise holiday with Hurtigruten Expeditions

🚢 16 🛏 2 🍴 ★ 📷

- ✓ Pre & post cruise hotel stay with breakfast included
- ✓ 16-night HX cruise from Vancouver to Nome onboard *MS Roald Amundsen*
- ✓ **EXCLUSIVE €100 onboard credit***

FROM **$15180*** PER PERSON

***Departs 23 Jul 25. Deal 20359666***

**ADD** flights **+** insurance to **Bundle+SAVE $500**

**Always here for you. For peace of mind, ask us about travel insurance.**

**Scan for more Cruise deals!**

Fly | Stay | Cruise | Tour

**LUXURY CRUISE EXPERTS ☎ 1300 038 785**

*for an international flight and CoverMore Comprehensive Travel Insurance and add on either a 7-night international cruise, tour, or hotel to SAVE $500 off your booking. Minimum spend of $7,000 applies. Offer may be withdrawn at any time. Full terms and conditions apply. Ask in-store or visit www.flightcentre.com.au/deals/bundle-save for full T&CS. **EUROPEAN SOJURN:** $400 onboard credit valid per stateroom & cannot be used in medical centre or casino. **ITALIAN & FRENCH RIVIERAS**: Prices quoted on sale until 7 Apr 25 subject to availability. Return economy class airfare from Perth to Rome and return from Barcelona including prepaid taxes. Full T&C's apply, see website for details. **ALASKA INSIDE PASSAGE & BRITISH COLUMBIA: Prices quoted on sale until 17 Apr 25 subject to availability.** €100 onboard credit valid per stateroom & cannot be used in medical centre or casino. Full terms & conditions apply, see website for details. **Flight Centre Travel Group Limited (ABN 25 003 377 188) trading as Flight Centre. ATAS Accreditation No. A10412.***

*weeklypress_fc_dps_gourmet traveller_31mar25*

# Simple financial protection for every stage of life

with Real Insurance

**10% cash back[1]**

**Since 2005, Real Insurance has been committed to providing Australians with simple and reliable insurance products, protecting what they value most.**

## Life Insurance

Provides you or your family a cash payment if you're diagnosed with a terminal illness or pass away[2]

- ✓ Choose cover from **$100,000 up to $2 million** depending on your circumstances
- ✓ Simply apply with **no medical or blood test**

## Income Protection Insurance

Provides you an income if you get sick or injured and can't work

- ✓ Cover **up to 70% of your income**, up to $15,000 per month[3]
- ✓ Premiums can be **tax deductible**, seek professional advice

## Funeral Insurance

Helps your family cover your funeral costs and any other expenses you may leave behind

- ✓ Cover from **$3,000 up to $15,000**[4]
- ✓ Triple payout for accidental death, **up to $45,000**

real INSURANCE®

REQUEST A QUOTE NOW
☎ 1300 745 364
realinsurance.com.au

[1] With The Real Reward, we refund 10% of the premiums you've paid after your first 12 months.
[2] Cover excludes death or terminal illness as a result of self-inflicted injury in the first 13 months. Terminal illness diagnosis with 24 months or less to live.
[3] Depending on your circumstances.
[4] Cover is for accidental serious injury and accidental death only in the first 12 months; cover for any cause thereafter.

This is general information and does not take into account your financial situation. Please consider the relevant Product Disclosure Statement and Target Market Determination available at realinsurance.com.au All Real life insurance products are promoted and distributed by Greenstone Financial Services Pty Ltd ABN 53 128 692 884, AFSL 343079, trading as Real Insurance, and issued by Hannover Life Re of Australasia Ltd ABN 37 062 395 484, AFSL 530811.

H9832_GT_Q425

**Drinks news** PAGE 46
**Meet winemaker Natillie Johnston** PAGE 48
**How to make a Take Two** PAGE 49
**Perfect long weekend sips** PAGE 50

# Drinks

**The Chandon Homestead, Yarra Valley**

EDITED BY **ALEXANDRA HARRIS**

# Drinks news

**TOP DROPS, NEW OPENINGS, AND INSIDE TIPS FROM THE EXPERTS**

Locally Made with Fresh Lemons
Poroso
LIMONCELLO

## TREND SET

Handpicked lemons lend the traditionally distilled Poroso Limoncello its clean flavour and creamy mouthfeel. It's our pick for a long weekend away with friends. $54, *drinkporoso.com*

## GOURMAND GAME

Clare Valley Gourmet Week festival is setting the stage for South Australian wines this May. Opening with a six-course dégustation dinner courtesy of chef and sommelier Nicola Palmer, 34 events will pepper the 10-day agenda, from masterclasses and long lunches to twilight tastings. *May 16 to 25, clarevalleygourmet.com.au*

## SPOTLIGHT ON

Andy Ainsworth, owner-operator at Daylesford's Bar Merenda, lets us in onwhat bottle he's bringing for a long weekend away and the wines to know.

**I will normally come armed with a magnum** to share on a long weekend with friends. And it's quite likely to be something cold and refreshing to kick off – maybe a Clos Cibonne rosé or perhaps an Eastern Peake chardonnay.

**I've been really excited about two digestifs of late** – and they're both a startling green. Beechworth Bitters' In The Weeds liqueur and Iseya Distillery's Scarlet Verde Amaro. Both are very restorative if you're in need of a second wind after a long luncheon.

**I keep my cocktail order pretty simple** with a classic Negroni. Sometimes two.

**After years of surprising and special bottles from all corners of the globe, I've learned it's unwise to say never to any wine variety.** However, I never order wines made on an industrial scale, to a recipe, from heavily overcropped vineyards.

**After a busy service at the wine bar, we pour a few cold Sailors Grave draughts** and put on something with a little bit of groove while we debrief. Tony Allen maybe? Talk Talk? That Yussef Kamaal record, perhaps?

**Grenache is my favourite trans-seasonal wine variety.** I drink Tavel in summer, Gredos in autumn, Sud Rhône in winter, and Central Victoria in spring.

**The Jacquère of the Savoie is a lesser-known variety to have on your radar this year.** It's a delicate white variety from the alpine region of eastern France. It also makes a splendid aperitif. *barmerenda.com.au*

PHOTOGRAPHY RICHARD GATES PHOTOGRAPHY (POROSO) & SOUTH AUSTRALIAN TOURISM COMMISSION (CLARE VALLEY).

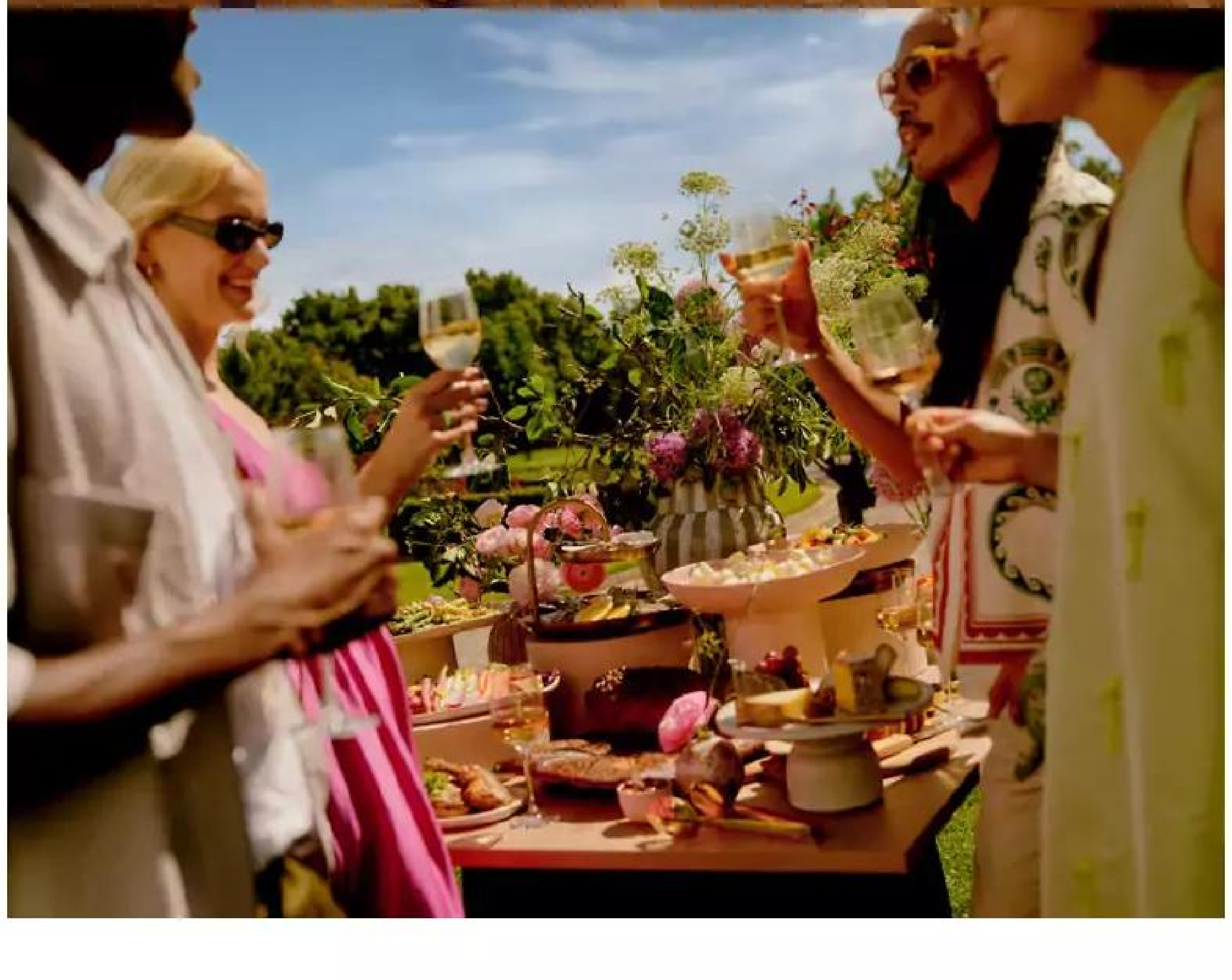
## PARTY PLAYER

Weekend entertaining calls for Champagne on ice and Georg Jensen delivers with this polished stainless steel Manhattan Champagne bowl. Crafted in an Art Deco style with a wide rim, place this in the centre of the table to dial up the festive mood. *$700, georgjensen.com*

PIPER
PIPER-HEIDSIECK
CHAMPAGNE
CUVÉE BRUT
TWIST THE SCRIPT
PIPER-HEIDSIECK
PIPER-HEIDSIECK

## ICON STATUS

In 1965, NASA astronauts requested it after the first spacewalk. It was Marilyn Monroe's favourite drink, and French pilot Jean de Suarez d'Aulan hid World War II weapons in its cellars. Now, Piper-Heidsieck is having some fun with its storied legacy and famous fans via its latest release, the Twist the Script tins. *$120, tts.piper-heidsieck.com*



## DESIGN STAR

Heritage meets luxury in Chandon's reimagined Yarra Valley homestead. The glorious wraparound verandah gives way to light, airy interiors by designer Melanie Beynon, while local furnishings add to the polish. With views over the vineyard and oak garden, the scene is set for tasting Étoile or basking in the luxury of the exclusive event space – made with private dining and enchanting garden parties in mind. *chandon.com.au*

PHOTOGRAPHY EARL CARTER PHOTOGRAPHY (CHANDON HOMESTEAD OUTDOORS).

# Natillie Johnston

This month we catch up with the Yarra Valley-based winemaker behind Tillie J Wines.

WORDS **ALEX MITCHESON**

Below: Tillie J Wines winemaker and founder Natillie Johnston.

**How did you come to love wine?** My family has always enjoyed great wine. Although I never grew up in a winery, a good bottle of plonk on the dinner table was where it all began for me. My family home is situated on the fringe of the Yarra Valley, so it was through proximity that I found myself drawn into wine and the industry.

**A wine that changed your life?** 1990 Domaine de Courcel Pommard Premier Cru. This was my birth year wine, opened for me by James Halliday at the end-of-vintage party at Coldstream Hills in 2012. It was not only such a privilege to have a wine of my birth year opened for me from James's personal cellar – it also began my curiosity for pinot noir, which led to my 2019 debut release under my wine label, Tillie J Wines.

**Who are your wine heroes?** There have been so many positive influences on my wine journey. However a few come to mind, including Steve Flamsteed, who I worked with for several years at the Giant Steps winery. Sarah Crowe from Yarra Yering, Sam Connew from Stargazer, and Sarah Fagan from TarraWarra Estate are all mentors and wine heroes who have provided inspiration and tutelage at various stages throughout my career.

**What are you making at this moment in time?** I am building a portfolio at Tillie J Wines centred around premium, cool-quality Burgundian varieties: pinot noir, chardonnay and aligoté. A fun little rosé named after my mum (Anna) is thrown in there to keep her happy.

**How would you describe your winemaking ethos?** I want to make wines that express all the knowledge I have collected over the years, travelling and learning about the craft of winemaking. I want to showcase the purity of the site from which I source my grapes. When it comes to my own viticultural practices, I aim to farm sustainably. I encourage balance among the vines with gentle intervention where necessary, while utilising natural resources around me to achieve this balance.

**Any wine myths you'd like to bust?** There is no right or wrong answer when it comes to tasting wine. Aromas and tastes attach themselves to emotions and experiences so specific to an individual. There aren't many other beverages that can be enjoyed with such personal nostalgia yet bring people closer together. This is one of the many reasons why I love wine.

**Your last supper food and wine pairing?** Oysters and a bottle of Chablis.

*tilliejwines.com.au*

PHOTOGRAPHY ASHLEY LUDKIN.

# Take Two

WORDS **ALEX MITCHESON**

We explore the origins of some of Australia's signature drinks and learn how to recreate them at home.

YOU'RE NEVER FAR FROM A HEATED DEBATE WHEN discussing the origins of pisco. Whether you believe this humble brandy-like spirit belongs to Chile or Peru, the origins of the Chilcano almost always return to the backstreets of Lima, hinging on the creativity of early 20th-century Italian immigrants longing for a Buongiorno. Replacing grappa with pisco is a straightforward swap, and it's a highball-style drink Alex Brownbridge – co-owner of Daisy Bar in Geelong – deems complex.

"Pisco brings grassiness and smoke, while lime juice and ginger ale provide acidity and spice," he says, claiming this simple three-ingredient cocktail is greater than the sum of its parts. "Our Take Two is a rework of the Chilcano in which we dial up the heat and vibrancy through the addition of dried chilli liqueur and pineapple."

The pineapple adds texture, as well as flavour, while ginger beer brings strength beyond ginger ale, and lemon juice replaces lime juice for freshness. Granted, there are a few more ingredients here, but the recipe maintains unfussiness and does not detract from the classic aromatic burnt-wine taste pisco fans appreciate.

Brownbridge's pick for the hero of this cocktail is BarSol Quebranta. "This is a clean, slightly vegetal pisco from the Ica Valley in Peru," he says. "When we garnish this with a kaffir lime leaf, the result is a lively drink – it's great to sip over a long, slow afternoon."

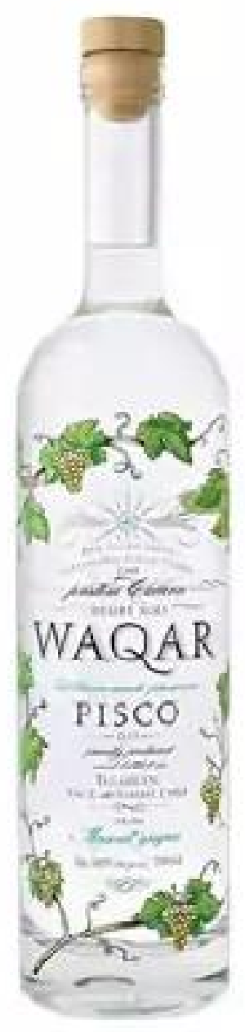
## MAKE IT YOURSELF

In a chilled highball glass, build on ice cubes 30ml pisco, 20ml chilli liqueur, 30ml fresh pineapple juice, 20ml fresh lemon juice, and 100ml ginger beer. Stir gently, adding a makrut lime leaf to garnish.

## 3 PISCOS TO TRY

BARSOL
PISCO

**BarSol Quebranta**
Coming from the Ica Valley – known as the "Land of the Sun"– and produced with the first pressing of 100 per cent quebranta grapes, creates unique purity with subtle citrus notes.
***$92 for 700ml***
***princewinestore.com.au***



**Waqar Pisco**
An artisanal high-altitude Chilean pisco from hand-picked Alexandria and pink muscat grapes, made in traditional copper alembics, and framed by five generations of knowledge.
***$90 for 700ml***
***nicks.com.au***

Pisco
DE CARRAL
ACHOLADO

**De Carral Acholado**
Blended piscos, or acholados, are a great starting point for those new to the spirit. Considering the lightness and appealing minerality, this is an ideal way to change up your next Martini.
***$86 for 700ml***
***thepiscopeople.com.au***

PHOTOGRAPHY NICK WATSON.

KUNIZAKARI
淡麗ゆず酒
甘さすっきり
72kcal
1L
CULT CRU WINE CO.
MCLAREN VALE
GRENACHE
DAL ZOTTO
KING VALLEY
NV Pucino
PROSECCO
ARCHIE ROSE DISTILLING CO.
GIN & SODA MANGO
with Finger Lime
PET NAT
DELINQUENTE WINE CO.

# Ready, steady, go

Long-weekend lounging is all about pre-batched cocktails, bagged wine and crafty cans, writes **SAMANTHA PAYNE**.

**Samantha is a sommelier, writer and wine consultant. @sl_payne**

WITH PUBLIC HOLIDAYS ON THE HORIZON, the last thing anyone wants is to waste that bonus free time curating the perfect drinks menu for a barbecue, park picnic or beachside sipping session. In fact, there's no need, thanks to the rise of premium, ready-to-drink beverages that combine ease with exceptional flavour. From crafted gin cocktails in a can to bagged boutique wine, these small-batch, carefully considered offerings redefine how we can enjoy a drink in the great outdoors.

Innovation in flavour is key, provided it feels intentional. There's a fine line between creativity and just throwing unusual ingredients together for the sake of it. The best versions of these new-wave drinks are balanced – taking cues from classic cocktail profiles, global drinking cultures, and the way people actually want to drink these days (skewing towards refreshing and light).

Beyond convenience, these drinks align with a shift in how we entertain and enjoy drinks socially. No longer reserved for home bars or elaborate set-ups, premium beverages are becoming just as much about the experience as the flavour. A well-made cocktail in a can equates to more time spent soaking up the sunshine and less time mixing and measuring. A boutique wine in a bag makes it easier to enjoy a glass on the go without worrying about corkscrews or breakable bottles.

Sustainability is another driving force behind this shift. Lightweight cans and recyclable packaging reduce waste and make transporting drinks effortless, whether to a backyard barbecue or a road trip down the coast. The trend of moderation also shapes the way we drink, boosting the appeal of high-quality beverages in smaller formats – whether it's a single-serve can of prosecco or a lower-alcohol sake or vermouth-based drink in a mini vessel. More people are choosing to sip mindfully, opting for premium drinks in portion sizes that encourage enjoyment without excess.

Small-batch producers are at the forefront, proving that quality and convenience don't have to be mutually exclusive. The result? Thoughtfully crafted, easy-to-share drinks that complement modern ways of gathering – where good company and great flavours take centrestage.

## FIVE TO BUY

**2022 Cult Cru Grenache, McLaren Vale, SA, $40 for 2L**
In the past five years, wine in cask has significantly transformed from low-quality, "cooking wine" to a premium, affordable product in sustainable packaging. The Cult Cru Grenache is a prime example, offering juicy raspberry and tart cranberry notes with savoury dark clove and cinnamon spices. Its medium-bodied density makes it an ideal choice for barbecues.
*cultcru.com.au*

**Dal Zotto NV Pucino Prosecco carton, King Valley, Vic, $141 for 24 x 250ml cans**
I've always been sceptical of wine in cans, as it often tastes a bit "spritzy", regardless of the style. But bubbly wine in a can is a perfect match. The first family to plant prosecco grapes in Australia has taken their innovation a step further with this picnic-friendly canned prosecco. Pair it with an antipasto platter; you've got everything you need for a celebratory moment.
*dalzotto.com.au*

**2024 Delinquente Pet Nat, Barmera, SA, $28 for 4 x 250ml cans**
For those who prefer their wine in a can with more oomph, this pet nat from Delinquente is the one to try. Crafted from fiano, vermentino and arinto grapes, it offers a tropical fruit-forward sparkle, with the vermentino adding a salty texture – ideal for takeaway sushi or a bucket of prawns by the beach.
*delinquentewineco.com*

**Archie Rose Dry Gin, Mango and Native Finger Lime, Botany, NSW, $139 for 24 x 330ml case**
As we head into autumn, this gin cocktail delivers summer vibes year-round. For those craving bartender-quality drinks in an easy, approachable package, this cocktail made with locally sourced and reclaimed Australian botanicals and Archie Rose Straight Dry Gin is the answer. This high-quality spirit requires no mixer or shaker – just open and enjoy at any social gathering.
*archierose.com.au*

**Kunizakari Tanrei Yuzushu, Aichi Prefecture, Japan, $54 for 1L**
My love for yuzushu is no secret (I've written about it often), and now Kunizakari offers it in a travel-friendly Tetra Pak container. Great for chilling in an Esky and sipping on its low-alcohol, refreshingly floral lemon flavours as the sun sets. Just add good friends, chips and dip, and a pack of Uno cards – fun times guaranteed (trust me, I've tested the theory).
*camperdowncellars.com.au*

PHOTOGRAPHY ALANA LANDSBERRY. STYLING MAXWELL ADEY.

VALUED AT $130+

GOURMET TRAVELLER

CURATED GIFT BOX

20 YEARS OF THE ITALIAN ISSUE
GOURMET TRAVELLER
SUMMER
Italian issue
WITH RECIPES BY
Alessandro Pavoni,
Julia Busuttil Nishimura,
AND MORE
TUSCANY / LIGURIA / PALERMO / FAVIGNANA

www.magshop.com.au/GTGIFT

Savings based On the *Gourmet Traveller* cover price of $12.50. For full terms and conditions, visit www.magshop.com.au/GTGIFT . Offer valid from 31st March 2025 - 27th April 2025 to Australian residents only 18 years or over. Subscription copies do not receive free gifts offered at retail. Our Privacy Policy can be found at aremedia. com.au/privacy and includes important information about our collection, use and disclosure of your personal information (including the provision of targeted advertising based on your online activities). It explains that if you do not provide us with information we have requested from you, we may not be able to provide you with the goods and services you require. It also explains how you can access or seek correction of your personal information, how you can complain about a breach of the Australian

# SUBSCRIBE & RECEIVE

## A BONUS *GOURMET TRAVELLER* CURATED GIFT BOX VALUED OVER $130⁺

NEIL PERRY'S FAMILY CHRISTMAS MENU
GOURMET TRAVELLER
Eat, drink and be merry
CRUISING THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN
PLUS, A WHITE CHRISTMAS IN ST MORITZ

SPAIN · GREECE · PORTUGAL · FRANCE · CROATIA
GOURMET TRAVELLER
The Mediterranean issue
CELEBRATE NEW YEAR WITH OUR SPANISH PARTY MENU
PLUS, STEP BY STEP TO PERFECT MARATHOPITA

JULIA BUSUTTIL NISHIMURA'S SUMMER DESSERTS
GOURMET TRAVELLER
TASTE of the TASMAN
Sensational summer seafood and our ultimate fish sando
EXPLORING AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND BY LAND AND SEA
PLUS, THE EVOLUTION OF AUCKLAND DINING

## SUBSCRIBE & RECEIVE

+ **12 ISSUES** of *Gourmet Traveller* for $85 via automatic renewal*

+ **A BONUS** *Gourmet Traveller* curated gift box valued at over $130⁺

+ **SAVE 43%** off the newsstand price

+ **FREE DELIVERY** of the magazine to your home each month

## ALREADY A SUBSCRIBER

Simply extend your subscription to receive this offer

*Hurry! Offer ends April 27, 2025*

**CALL 136 116 & QUOTE M254GMT**

Privacy Principles and how we will deal with a complaint of that nature. *If you elect the automatic renewal payment term, your subscription is subject to continued auto-renewal. Your credit card will continue to be charged as per the above rate and term unless you cancel, and is subject to any price increases notified to you in accordance with the Magshop terms and conditions. For full Magshop terms and conditions including auto-renewal payment plan terms, please visit magshop.com.au/terms. After the first 12 issues the subscription will renew at $85 every 12 issues thereafter. Subscription will be renewed unless cancelled. Please allow up to 6 weeks to receive your subscriber bonus curated gift box valued over $130. Offer valid while stocks last. One gift per subscription.

# WHERE THE WILD THINGS ARE

Three chefs converge for a masterclass in sustainable cooking at a wilderness retreat in Tasmania's Currawong Lakes. As **MICHAEL HARDEN** discovers, a nose-to-tail feast awaits.

PHOTOGRAPHY **NESS VANDERBURGH**

**Above: fly fishing at Currawong Lakes. Opposite: deer roam the property.**

IT'S A MASTERCLASS IN CONTRASTS, THE spiritual meeting the visceral. We're in the final stages of a velvety twilight that's descending on Currawong Lakes, a spectacular 810-hectare private wilderness retreat encircled by forest reserves in the highlands behind Tasmania's east coast. As the darkness deepens and a blaze of stars begins to make its presence felt, the only sounds are the wind in the surrounding eucalyptus forests, some dwindling goodnight birdsong, a rising chorus of frogs from the property's three freshwater lakes and the squelching, cracking sounds of a recently shot deer being field-dressed by torchlight after being winched into a tree.

Witnessing the fascinating and, to the uninitiated, confronting spectacle of this real-time butchery are three chefs. They've gathered at Currawong Lakes because of a shared passion for and commitment to the sustainability of cooking with wild food, particularly when it comes to the eating of invasive species. Discussing the recent changes to Tasmania's laws that have opened the door (with many caveats) to wild venison being sold commercially for human consumption is partly why they're here, but sharing recipes and techniques is equally high on the agenda, as is the opportunity to hunt, fish and cook together.

The trio includes Jo Barrett, who dispatched the deer with a single, impressively clean shot just 15 minutes before. A long-time sustainability advocate, she recently launched Wildpie, a company that makes extremely delicious pastry filled with the likes of venison and red wine, wallaby and mountain pepper, and Sri Lankan goat curry, alongside a wild boar sausage roll.

Also present is Vince Trim, executive chef at Hobart's MONA where a wild protein-only policy is in place and who featured in the recent ABC television series *Eat the Invaders*. Rounding out the trio is Chris Lucas, a locally-based chef who runs Currawong Lakes' food program, grows biodynamic vegetables and adheres to a Tassie-only policy when it comes to produce.

It's easy to clock them as chefs, even in the dimming light. It's not merely their lack of squeamishness as the deer's organs are fished out of its carcass; more the way they move closer to the animal, bending forward like art connoisseurs in a gallery, marvelling at the fattiness or the lacey beauty of its caul while discussing all the ➤

**Above: chefs Chris Lucas and Jo Barrett cook venison kebabs and local trout on the open grill.**

possibilities and flavours this young "buck spikey" deer offers them.

Tom Blackwell, Currawong Lakes' hunting guide and field-dressing educator, asks Lucas if he'd like the deer's kidneys. The chef declines, instead requesting the heart and liver for a dish he's planned for the following day's menu. In paddock-to-plate terms, this must constitute some of the lowest food mile totals imaginable.

Visitors to Currawong Lakes are not obliged to participate in a hunt or its aftermath, though hunting evidently remains on the menu. There are around 650 free-range deer on the property, its borders meticulously fenced to prevent any escaping into the surrounding native forests. But Currawong's new owners, Kim and Rod Forge, bought this beautiful and unique place last year because they believed it has plenty more potential beyond venison.

The majestic landscape includes steep, thickly forested hills that turn fairy-tale golden in the sunset and rustle with native wildlife; wallabies, wombats, echidnas and the occasional Tasmanian Devil. The bush is also stitched with dirt tracks for walking, cycling and quad biking. The spring-fed lakes, drifting with mist every morning, swarm with birdlife, their rippling surfaces regularly broken by the leap and splash of the wild brown and rainbow trout which have made this place a magnet for fly fishers. There's a credentialled guide for that too. There's also, for those who might like to shoot rifles but are not into the killing thing, a magnificent clay target shooting range with 20 different traps that fling skeets high into the air from both behind and in front of you or across the ground, simulating the trajectory of a running rabbit. The range features a timber "clubhouse" with a Whisky Lounge that's set aside for an après clay target whisky (Tasmanian, of course), complete with leather furniture, taxidermy creatures, mounted antlers, an open fireplace and a vibe that encourages adopting a posh English accent.

There's an airstrip in the works and plans for a Nordic-style sauna that will include a timber jetty so you can jump in the lake to cool off. Food has become a focus too. All of the five recently refurbished houses on the property (three secluded Bush Cabins, the larger Lake House and the Hideaway, all with brand-new beds and excellent sheets and pillows) feature simple but well-appointed kitchens for those who want to self-cater. Now there's a chef on board too, which means in-house private dining as an option, plus an impressive selection of local ingredient-focused ready meals.

If the feast cooked the next day over three different styles of barbecues is anything to go by, the in-house dining feature is well worth ➤

Clockwise from top left: MONA executive chef Vince Trim; venison kebabs on the barbecue; fly fishing gear; abalone with ras el hanout (front) and barley and chickpea grain risotto.

**Above: the countryside at Currawong Lakes. Opposite: the stone fireplace in the living area at the Lake House.**

considering. Admittedly, this was a gathering of three supremely talented chefs showcasing the variety and versatility of Tasmanian wild foods, but just from the quality and variety of the ingredients on show, it's easy to begin questioning why it's not more widely and readily available.

There were venison kebabs featuring leg meat, heart, liver, smoked speck and onion that had been brushed with whipped marrow. Trout from the lake was butterflied and barbecued. Wallaby was served as a tartare topped with pepper-cured quail eggs, slivers of abalone were spiced with ras el hanout and venison tagine served with couscous. A radicchio salad was tossed with Tasmanian hazelnuts, sea urchin served raw with a squeeze of lemon, wild boar dim sims accompanied by fragrant chilli oil and potatoes teamed with crisp saltbush and wattleseed butter.

For Kim Forge, a former teacher and unapologetic foodie originally from Canada, the feast and the presence of these chefs was not only like winning the lottery but a brilliant snapshot of what she and her husband Rod, a fifth-generation Victorian grain farmer, want to achieve at Currawong Lakes.

"It's all about celebrating this magnificent landscape and showing people – educating them, I suppose – about the beauty of what Tasmania has to offer," she says. "There's plenty of amazing activities here but I think what makes this place particularly special is that it offers the luxury of time. Life moves more slowly here. Wi-Fi's only available in specific parts of the property, there's zero light pollution so you get to fully appreciate the stars, and conversations become focused on the sounds and the smells and the flavours of the property rather than what's outside of it. It reminds you of what nature sounds like and I think that's become one of life's greatest luxuries."

On a property where you travel on dusty dirt roads, scattering wallabies and deer as you go, where there is an imperative to watch for snakes and your comfortable but basic cabin offers zero mobile coverage, where you may hunt or fish and then cook your own dinner and the bush surrounding you is thick and untamed, luxury may seem like an interesting descriptor.

Yet it makes sense watching the wrench felt by the visiting chefs about leaving Currawong Lakes, and hearing their vows to return. It makes you think that Kim is right, that disappearing into the peace and silence of the wilderness – especially when it's a wilderness accompanied by a comfortable night's sleep, excellent wild produce and plenty of Tasmanian whisky and wine – may truly be one of life's great luxuries. *currawonglakes.com* ●

MICHAEL HARDEN FLEW TO TASMANIA COURTESY OF TOURISM TASMANIA.

# Counting beans

Following in the footsteps of craft beer and specialty coffee, Australia's bean-to-bar chocolate movement is beginning to thrive, explains **LUKE OWEN SMITH**. With it comes a vast new flavour landscape for chocolate connoisseurs to explore.

PHOTOGRAPHY **ALANA LANDSBERRY**

STYLING MAXWELL ADEY.

THE 21ST CENTURY HAS BEEN KIND to anyone with an adventurous palate. There's now an astonishing variety of artisan foods and epicurean treats available, with consumers spoiled for choice in every aisle of the supermarket. You can find the exact roast profile of coffee you like, the particular hops you favour in beer, and the specific amount of sourness you prefer in bread. For anyone with decision anxiety, it's a delectable nightmare.

At first glance, modern-day chocolate shelves offer the same abundance. There are countless attractive brands, bright colours and exciting flavours on offer, but behind all those tempting wrappers, you might be surprised by the lack of diversity. Most mass-produced chocolate is made from similar cacao beans – the main ingredient of chocolate – and usually offers the same "chocolatey" flavour we're all familiar with.

Surprisingly, there are also many brands that don't produce their own chocolate. A lot of Australian chocolatiers use pre-made, mass-produced "couverture" from companies like Barry Callebaut or Valrhona, which they melt down and repurpose for their own creations. So while there are many different chocolate bars on a shelf, many of them offer the same core flavour, and some are literally made from the same chocolate as each other.

This lack of variation inspired Cuvée Chocolate co-founder Deniz Karaca to create his own chocolate from scratch, after years of working with European couverture. "We wanted to create something that was unique in the market," says Karaca. "It's very hard when you buy the same ingredients as all your main competitors. If you start at the same point, you don't necessarily end at the same point, but you end up with something very similar."

Originally from Germany but now based in Melbourne, Karaca has more than 20 years experience as a pastry chef and chocolatier. He placed third in the 2013 World Chocolate Masters competition in Paris, and was Savour Patissier of the Year in 2016. Despite reaching such pinnacles of chocolate success, he had a strong desire to take things one step further, and in 2019 he started making bean-to-bar chocolate, using a variety of rare types of cacao.

Cacao is a tropical fruit native to South America but is now cultivated ➤

RATIO
ZOKOKO
CHILI
hand-cra
EAN TO BAR CHOCOLATE

ZOKOKO
Cuvée
Chocolate Makers
PURE ORIGIN
Mbingu Dark
Tanzania
Pure origin BEAN TO BAR CHOCOLATE. Directly sourced from the Kilombero district of Tanzania, this chocolate displays notes of raisin, plums and panela.
70%
CACAO CONTENT

"The biggest thing about bean-to-bar is transparency. We've got nothing to hide – anyone can see the equipment we're using; anyone can see the ingredients."

worldwide, typically within 20 degrees north or south of the equator. Much like the diverse grape varieties used to craft different wines, there are many different types of cacao, offering more than 400 natural flavour notes. Cuvée Chocolate's Grand Cru 75% Dark Chocolate bar, for example, carries distinct cherry and plum notes, thanks to the Tanzanian cacao with which it's made. The familiar "chocolate" flavour many of us grew up with is just one of cacao's many possibilities, yet it remains the dominant profile in mainstream chocolate.

The process of turning cacao into chocolate is long and complex. It begins with farmers harvesting cacao pods, fermenting the beans, then drying them out. The beans are then shipped to the chocolate maker, who roasts the beans to fine-tune the flavour. They're then cracked and "winnowed" to separate the inner nibs from their shells, before the nibs are ground into a paste, known as cacao mass. The mass is refined for smoothness, then conched to further develop flavour and texture – a process that involves continuously mixing and aerating the chocolate for up to 72 hours.

"It's all really hands-on," says Karaca. "If you come into our kitchen, it's not just a stainless steel line of machines that are all connected, where you chuck in beans at one end and chocolate comes out at the other. Every step of our process has a human involved; every step has quality control. We can really keep our finger on the pulse."

The bean-to-bar movement was largely based in North America until around 2005, when craft chocolate makers started emerging across the globe. Australia was among the early adopters, with Michelle Morgan of Zokoko in Sydney establishing her brand in 2006. Today, there are more than 35 Australian bean-to-bar makers, as well as a handful of specialty cacao growers in northern Queensland.

Debbie Makin of Ratio Cocoa Roasters in Melbourne is a former zoologist and lifelong chocolate enthusiast. Inspired by her brother's coffee roastery and its "bean-to-cup" ethos, Makin followed her chocolate dream and set up a bean-to-bar factory in Brunswick in 2017. The factory has a glass wall running through its centre, behind which you can see the full production process, from sacks of beans at one end to wrapped bars at the other.

"The biggest thing about bean-to-bar is transparency," says Makin. "We've got nothing to hide – anyone can see the equipment we're using; anyone can see the ingredients we're using."

Like most specialty foods, bean-to-bar chocolate costs more than mass-produced alternatives, with most bars priced between $10 and $15. That price isn't just a reflection of the high quality ingredients and craftsmanship, it's also a result of ethically sourcing the beans. "Sourcing directly from farmers or cooperatives means we know exactly where our beans come from," says Makin. "We know that the farmer's being paid a fair price, well above market rates."

Makin is also the organiser of The Australian Chocolate Festival by Bean-to-Bar Makers. Last year's inaugural festival featured 25 stalls and chocolate makers from seven different countries, with a strong emphasis on educating the public about the quality, ethics and flavour diversity of bean-to-bar chocolate. This year's festival is happening on July 5 to 6 at the Seaworks Precinct in Williamstown, Victoria, with twice as many stalls and visitors expected.

Although bean-to-bar chocolate is arguably 20 years behind the specialty coffee or craft beer trends, it's the fastest growing sector in the global chocolate industry. Educating consumers and changing culture takes time, but the Australian movement is introducing people to chocolate with more flavour, nuance and purpose than they ever thought possible. Thanks to the hard work of Deniz Karaca, Debbie Makin and a host of other passionate pioneers, there's never been a more enticing or compelling time to be a chocolate lover. ●

Waffle On
Since 2003
HOWM
10
SHARED
ZONE
SINE
QUA
NON
HOWM
Campbell
Arcade
(Closure)

**Above: Waffle On's Le Parisien baguette with Gruyère, ham, French pickles and mustard.
Opposite: Waffle On's exterior.**

# Flavour trip

Long weekends are too short for a global getaway but they are the perfect window to eat your way around the world. **JESS HO** takes us on a culinary odyssey of Melbourne.

PHOTOGRAPHY **PARKER BLAIN**

IF YOU'RE ANYTHING LIKE ME, THE IDEA OF going away for a long weekend stresses you out. In my mind, the prospect of packing everything I need for a few days, getting in a car, driving for half a day, only to pack it all up and drive back after 24 hours is not relaxing. Plus, I always come home missing a charger. What I like to do instead is take advantage of being in the city when everyone else is gone. I walk into restaurants that I usually have to stand in line for a seat. You know the ones I'm talking about. Tiny holes in the wall that bake their own bread, make hand-pulled noodles and grill spiced meats over charcoal. In my mind, I'm still travelling. I am just travelling with my mouth. My method simply cuts out the stressful middleman.

Above: Jess Ho samples one of Waffle On's baguettes.

## FRANCE

It's easy to find a good croissant in Melbourne these days. What's much harder to find is a good baguette. Waffle On is the place to go for a proper French baguette where the fillings are classic, the bread is baked daily, and the owner Marc Laucher has been assembling sandwiches to order since 2003. The bread itself is crisp without shredding the roof of your mouth and yielding enough to encapsulate lashings of condiments such as butter, mustard, brie or pâté without the structure of the sandwich being compromised. Baguettes come as simple as ham or salami with butter, or heavily filled with thin shavings of roast beef, cornichons and dressed leaves. But what's with the name? When Laucher first opened more than 20 years ago, he introduced Melbourne to Belgian waffles studded with pearl sugar. The baguettes went on to became the star, but the name (and waffles) remained – a truly laissez-faire business approach.
**Waffle On, Shop 9, Degraves St**

> It would be a crime to go past the lamb kebab; a perfect mix of fatty and lean cubes of meat speared onto sword-like skewers, cooked over coal and doused in a mix of dusty spices.

XINJIANG LAMIAN
新疆拉面
255
OPEN

From left: Xinjiang Lamian's exterior; and its lamb kebabs..

## SOUTH KOREA

Oh, gimbap, I love you so. Whatever you do, don't ever call it "Korean sushi" because it is not. Directly translated, gimbap is "seaweed rice", which is where the comparisons to sushi begin and end. The rice of gimbap is seasoned with salt and sesame oil, making it savoury, whereas rice for futomaki is seasoned with vinegar, sugar and salt. Gimbap is a labour of love, filled with an array of ingredients like pickles, sautéed protein, blanched vegetables and omelette that have been prepared individually before being rolled together to create a substantial and balanced meal. I can never resist the gimbap at Jang Go Mama. Each gimbap is rolled to order, brushed with sesame oil and run through a slicer before being served – sometimes, still warm from the radiant heat of the rice cooker. What makes these gimbap special isn't just their freshness, but the fact that premium, fat, chewy grains of Korean rice are used, along with fresh leaves of perilla adding a subtle undertone of anise. My go-to is the spicy dry squid, which is perfect if you like your rolls with a bit of heat.

**Jang Go Mama, 147 Lonsdale St**

## XINJIANG, CHINA

Lamb, cumin and potatoes aren't typically associated with Chinese food, but these ingredients are synonymous with the Xinjiang region. Due to its north-western location in China, a blend of Uyghur, Hui, Han, Kazakh and Russian influences contribute to Xinjiang cuisine, which is relatively unknown to Melburnians. Thankfully, owner Victor Zhang emigrated from Ürümqi and opened Xinjiang Lamian on Elizabeth Street in 2020.

It would be a crime to go past the lamb kebab; a perfect mix of fatty and lean cubes of meat speared onto sword-like skewers, cooked over coal and sprinkled liberally in a mix of cumin and other dusty spices. It pairs perfectly with the springy hand-pulled noodles anointed in a simple stir-fry of garlic chives, shreds of lamb and blistered, dried chillies. It comes with a precautionary side of scissors as each strand of noodle stretches on for days. Another favourite is the da pan ji, "big pan chicken", an earthy stew of chicken, potatoes and peppers. It can be ordered as a main to be eaten with rice, but "the move" is to add some wide hand-pulled noodles to the base of the dish to lap up all the stewing liquid.

**Xinjiang Lamian, 255 Elizabeth St**

Those looking for adventure will be rewarded by ordering the fermented fish entrails soup. It's not for the faint-hearted; the funk in the dish might be more approachable than at first glance, but the spice level is not.

PA TONG
Thai restaurant
PA TONG
Thai restaurant

Above: Pa Tong 's exterior. Below: a spread at Pa Tong. Opposite: inside its dining room.

## THAILAND

The classic immigrant mentality around food is: if you can't find it, make it. This is true of Pa Tong co-owners Boonruxsa Sangmanee, Farn, Noppanat Pornsombun and Masarat Bumrungpongsinchai with the punchy and fiery flavours of Southern Thailand, which is why they opened it. Sure, the menu has the ubiquitous favourites that we Aussies know and love, such as pad Thai, fried rice and fried chicken, but that's not what I go to Pa Tong for. I go there for the sour yellow curry made with a paste so viscous, it runs as thick as curdled cream. Swimming in the yellow pool are tubes of baby lotus stems which are filled with the fierce curry – marked on the menu with three chillis as both a gauge and a warning – and your choice of protein. My pick is always the fish roe; poached and thickly sliced, best smashed against a serve of jasmine rice and flooded with sauce. I like to accompany this with a fluffy, shallow-fried Thai omelette with cha-om to temper the heat and add a herbaceous bass note. Those looking for adventure will be rewarded by ordering the fermented fish entrails soup, which can be eaten with rice or kanom jeen. It sounds more challenging than it tastes; the entrails are actually used to make a sauce that's the base for the soup, which is then built upon with meaty chunks of fresh fish and vegetables. Still, it's not for the faint-hearted; the funk in the dish might be more approachable than at first glance, but the spice level is not.

**Pa Tong Thai, 271 Flinders Lane**

Clockwise from left: squid ink tagliatelle, Skull Island prawn, smoked tomato and 'nduja; head chef Cameron Kydd; and the dining room at Junction Moama.

> "Indulge in the perfect combination of succulent Skull Island prawns, paired with freshly made squid ink-infused tagliatelle topped off with smoked tomato fondue, a kick of 'nduja butter and confit cherry tomatoes."
>
> **Cameron Kydd,**
> **Head chef, Junction Moama**

# Destination dining

Set in picturesque Moama on the Murray River, Junction Moama promises a seasonal dining experience reflective of the Echuca region and the Riverina Murray food bowl.

A DÉGUSTATION MENU IS not what you'd expect at a regional restaurant in the heart of rural New South Wales. Located in the Riverina Murray area, the region is attracting a growing food scene with craft breweries, gin distillery, wineries, local producers and artistans all calling it home. Junction Moama restaurant taps into the produce from the district at every opportunity, offering a modern Australian menu based on seasonal, local ingredients including wagyu beef from Cohuna, Berkshire pork from Bundarra and truffles from Alpine Truffles.

On a Friday and Saturday night, a seven-course dégustation designed around seasonal specials and key signature dishes takes centrestage with the option for a beverage pairing menu to extend the dining experience.

The 54-seat main dining room also hosts Masterclass events throughout the year, partnering with local wineries and distilleries, cheese producers and olive farmers to create expert-led tastings, curated pairings and inside knowledge set within the contemporary exposed brick and polished concrete space.

Central to the Junction Moama experience is the extensive wine list offering regional wines and spirits as well as an international selection from top wine regions globally. The regional line-up includes Fighting Gully Road, Bannockburn Vineyards, Wild Duck Creek Estate and Flynn's Wines.

**ADDRESS**
6 Shaw St, Moama, NSW

**OPENING HOURS**
Thur 5pm - late
Fri 5pm - late
Sat Noon - late
Sun Noon - 5pm

Junction is an over 18 venue at all times – this includes newborns and infants.

**DISCOVER MORE**

1800 806 777
*junctionmoama.com.au*

JUNCTION
MOAMA

**Four ways with roast potatoes**
PAGE 82

**Mastering Peking duck**
PAGE 84

**Long, lazy lunching**
PAGE 88

**Focus on fig season**
PAGE 98

# Food

**Lamb, fig and fillo pot pies with feta skordalia** p102

PHOTOGRAPHY BRETT STEVENS.

*Gourmet Traveller* uses free-range pork and poultry, supplied by Australian Pork and Aurum Poultry, in the *GT* Test Kitchen and in all our photo shoots.

PHOTOGRAPHY **JAMES MOFFATT**
STYLING **ELISA BAKER**
RECIPES **JESSICA BROOK**
FOOD PREPARATION **KATHY KNUDSEN**

# Everyday

Easy entertaining, simple weeknight dinners and suppers to share.

V

## Roasted eggplant and ezme salad

SERVES 2 // PREP 15 MINS // COOK 25 MINS

| | |
|---|---|
| **1** | **large eggplant (about 500gm), halved lengthways** |
| **1** | **tsp cornflour** |
| **1** | **garlic clove, crushed** |
| **2** | **tbsp extra-virgin olive oil** |
| | **Charred flatbread, to serve** |
| | **EZME SALAD** |
| **1** | **golden shallot, finely chopped** |
| **1** | **large vine-ripened tomato, deseeded, finely chopped** |
| **1** | **small red capsicum, seeds and membrane removed, finely chopped** |
| **¼** | **cup (loosely packed) flat leaf parsley, finely chopped** |
| **2** | **tbsp lemon juice** |
| **2** | **tbsp pomegranate molasses** |
| **1** | **tbsp extra-virgin olive oil** |
| **1** | **tsp Aleppo pepper, plus extra for sprinkling** |

**1** Preheat oven to 220°C fan-forced. Score eggplant in a diamond pattern, then dust cut sides with cornflour.

**2** Combine garlic and olive oil in a small bowl and season generously. Brush garlic oil over cut sides of eggplant, then place cut-side down on a baking tray lined with baking paper. Roast until light golden (20 minutes). Turn eggplant halves, return to oven and roast until golden and caramelised (12-15 minutes).

**3** Meanwhile, for ezme salad, place all ingredients in a bowl, season to taste and stand for flavours to develop (10 minutes)

**4** Divide salad among plates. Top with eggplant, sprinkle with extra Aleppo pepper and serve with grilled flatbread.

+

### SERVING SUGGESTION

Add some fried haloumi or lamb kofta to add extra protein and make this a complete meal.

# Crisp chorizo and chickpea pasta with harissa and burnt butter yoghurt

SERVES 2 // PREP 10 MINS // COOK 15 MINS

| | |
|---|---|
| **¼** | **small bunch kale (about 130gm), leaves coarsely torn, stems finely chopped** |
| **60** | **ml (¼ cup) extra-virgin olive oil** |
| **100** | **gm Greek-style yoghurt** |
| | **Finely grated zest of ½ lemon, plus 1 tbsp lemon juice** |
| **200** | **gm spaghetti** |
| **1** | **golden shallot, finely chopped** |
| **100** | **gm chorizo, finely chopped** |
| **2** | **tsp harissa paste** |
| **1** | **tsp smoked paprika** |
| **400** | **gm can chickpeas, rinsed and drained** |
| **50** | **gm unsalted butter, chopped** |
| **1** | **tbsp finely chopped chives** |

**1** Preheat oven to 200°C fan-forced. Place kale leaves on a large baking tray lined with baking paper; drizzle with 1 tbsp olive oil, season to taste and massage to coat. Roast until crisp and lightly charred (8-10 minutes).

**2** Meanwhile, combine yoghurt, lemon juice and zest in a small bowl and season to taste.

**3** Cook spaghetti in a large saucepan of salted boiling water until barely al dente (5-8 minutes). Reserve 80ml pasta water, then drain.

**4** Heat olive oil in a large frying pan over medium-high heat. Add shallot, kale stems and chorizo, and cook, stirring occasionally, until golden (4-6 minutes). Add harissa paste, smoked paprika and chickpeas; cook, stirring, until golden and fragrant (3-4 minutes).

**5** Meanwhile, cook butter in a small saucepan over high heat until nut brown (1-2 minutes), then remove from the heat.

**6** Add pasta and reserved pasta water to pan with chickpea mixture and toss to coat. Divide pasta among shallow bowls, top with yoghurt sauce, drizzle with burnt butter and scatter with kale chips and chives to serve. ➤

+

**VEG BOOST**

Roasted cauliflower would make a welcome nutritious addition to this modern pasta dish.

DF GF

# Oven-roasted Thai curry with pumpkin and tofu

SERVES 4 // PREP 15 MINS // COOK 50 MINS

| | |
|---|---|
| **60** | **ml (¼ cup) vegetable oil** |
| **1** | **Spanish onion, cut into thin wedges** |
| **4** | **garlic cloves, sliced** |
| **2** | **tbsp red curry paste** |
| **1** | **lemongrass stalk, white part only, halved and bruised** |
| **400** | **ml coconut milk** |
| **1** | **tbsp lime juice** |
| **60** | **ml (¼ cup) fish sauce** |
| **½** | **butternut pumpkin (about 800gm), peeled and cut into 1.5cm thick slices** |
| **500** | **gm baby chat potatoes, halved** |
| **1** | **tbsp grated palm sugar** |
| **500** | **gm firm tofu, cut into 2.5cm pieces** |
| **2** | **tbsp toasted peanuts, coarsely chopped** |
| | **Steamed jasmine rice and Thai herbs (such as coriander, mint and Thai basil), to serve** |

**1** Preheat oven to 220°C fan-forced. Heat 1 tbsp oil in a large frying pan over medium-high heat. Add onion, and cook, stirring occasionally, until lightly caramelised (5-6 minutes). Add garlic and curry paste, and cook, stirring constantly, until fragrant and oil separates (3-4 minutes). Add lemongrass, coconut milk, lime juice, 2 tbsp fish sauce and 200ml water; bring to simmer. Place pumpkin and potatoes in a large deep roasting pan, pour over curry sauce, cover with foil and bake until vegetables are tender (30 minutes). Uncover and bake until vegetables begin to caramelise (10 minutes).

**2** Meanwhile, place palm sugar and remaining fish sauce in a bowl, stir to dissolve sugar, add tofu and toss to coat; set aside to marinate (20 minutes).

**3** Heat remaining oil in a large frying pan over medium-high heat. Add tofu and cook, turning, until caramelised (3-4 minutes).

**4** Transfer curry to a large serving bowl. Scatter with peanuts and herbs and serve with steamed rice on the side.

+

**DOUBLE DUTY**

This is a great prep-ahead meal. Make a double batch and your mid-week lunches are sorted.

+

**EXTRA INDULGENCE**

Add some thinly sliced lap cheong to this fried rice for extra flavour and a rich hit of umami.

DF

# Prawn and broccolini fried rice with chilli oil

SERVES 6 // PREP 15 MINS // COOK 20 MINS

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | kg uncooked tiger prawns |
| 2 | packets baby corn, halved on an angle |
| 2 | bunches broccolini, trimmed and cut into 3cm lengths |
| 3 | cups cooked jasmine rice, cold |
| 2 | spring onions, thinly sliced |
| | Lemon wedges, to serve |
| | CHILLI OIL |
| 250 | ml (1 cup) vegetable oil |
| 4 | garlic cloves, crushed |
| 2 | tsp chilli flakes |
| 1 | tsp coarsely crushed coriander seeds |
| ½ | tsp ground Sichuan pepper |
| 1 | tbsp each black and white sesame seeds |
| 1 | tbsp sesame oil |
| 1 | tbsp soy sauce |
| 1 | tsp caster sugar |

**1** Peel prawns keeping tails intact; reserve shells and heads for chilli oil.

**2** For chilli oil, combine oil and reserved prawn shells and heads in a large frying pan or wok over medium-high heat. Cook, breaking up shells and heads with the back of a spoon, until fragrant and oil colour deepens (10 minutes). Strain through a fine sieve into a small saucepan (reserve frying pan and discard solids). Return oil to medium heat and cook until shimmering (3 minutes). Meanwhile, combine garlic, spices, sesame seeds, sesame oil, soy, sugar and 1 tsp sea salt flakes in a small heatproof bowl; carefully pour over hot oil and set aside to cool.

**3** Heat 2 tbsp chilli oil in reserved pan over high heat. Stir-fry prawns, corn and broccolini until lightly charred (3-4 minutes). Remove from pan. Add cold rice and stir-fry until beginning to caramelise (3-4 minutes).

**4** Divide rice among serving bowls; top with prawns, broccolini, corn, spring onions and drizzle with extra chilli oil. Serve with lemon wedges on the side. ➤

DF

# Zucchini yemesta with avgolemono sauce

SERVES 6 // PREP 20 MINS // COOK 1 HR 15 MINS

| | |
|---|---|
| **50** | **gm (¼ cup) medium-grain white rice** |
| **8** | **white zucchini (230gm each; see note)** |
| **250** | **gm minced lean beef** |
| **1** | **onion, finely chopped** |
| **1** | **tsp dried mint** |
| **1** | **tbsp finely chopped parsley** |
| **1** | **tbsp extra-virgin olive oil, plus extra to serve** |
| **750** | **ml (3 cups) chicken stock** |
| | **Toasted pine nuts, soft herbs (such as mint, dill and parsley), and thinly peeled lemon zest, to serve** |
| | **AVGOLEMONO SAUCE** |
| **2** | **tbsp extra-virgin olive oil, plus extra to serve** |
| **1½** | **tbsp plain flour** |
| **1** | **egg** |
| **60** | **ml (¼ cup) lemon juice** |

**1** Place rice in a heatproof bowl. Cover with boiling water and set aside to soak (20 minutes).

**2** Meanwhile, cut zucchini in half lengthways; using a teaspoon hollow out the centre leaving 5mm zucchini flesh and set aside.

**3** Combine beef, onion, dried mint, parsley and olive oil in a large bowl; season with 1 tsp coarsely ground pepper and 1 tbsp sea salt flakes. Drain rice; add to mince mixture and stir well to combine. Divide mixture among zucchini halves (leaving 1cm at each end for filling to expand while it cooks) and sandwich zucchini halves together.

**4** Place zucchini, in a single layer, in a large casserole pan. Pour over stock, bring to the simmer over medium heat; cover with a tight-fitting lid, reduce heat to low and cook until rice is cooked, and zucchini is tender (50 minutes to 1 hour).

**5** Carefully remove zucchini from braising liquid. Strain braising liquid through a fine sieve; reserve 375ml for avgolemono sauce.

**6** For avgolemono sauce, combine oil and flour in a saucepan over medium heat; cook, stirring constantly, for 1 minute. Gradually whisk in reserved braising liquid, bring to the boil, then reduce heat to low. Whisk egg and lemon in a small bowl until combined, then gradually whisk into hot braising liquid; immediately remove from heat and season to taste.

**6** Spoon avgolemono sauce into a large shallow serving bowl. Arrange stuffed zucchinis on top, drizzle with extra olive oil, scatter with pine nuts, herbs and lemon zest to serve.

**Note** White zucchini is sweeter than green; if unavailable substitute green zucchini.

+

**MAKE IT GF**

A delicious starter for easy weekend entertaining, simply substitute gluten-free flour in the avgolemono sauce to cater to gluten-free guests.

## Mango pickle butter roasted lamb with roti

SERVES 4-6 // PREP TIME 15 MINS // COOK 30 MINS

| | |
|---|---|
| **18** | **lamb cutlets (about 1kg), French-trimmed, at room temperature** |
| **1** | **tbsp neutral-flavoured oil** |
| | **Warm roti and toasted shredded coconut, to serve** |
| | **MANGO PICKLE BUTTER** |
| **125** | **gm unsalted butter, at room temperature** |
| **60** | **gm (¼ cup) Indian hot mango pickle** |
| **2** | **garlic cloves, crushed** |
| **2** | **tbsp finely chopped coriander, plus extra to serve** |

**1** For mango pickle butter, combine all ingredients in bowl and season.
**2** Season lamb cutlets. Heat oil in a large ovenproof frying pan over medium-high heat. Add lamb and cook, in batches, until golden and cooked to your liking (3 minutes each side for medium). Drain off excess fat and wipe pan clean. Add mango pickled butter to pan and stir over low heat until melted.
**3** Arrange lamb on a serving platter; drizzle with mango pickle butter, scatter with extra coriander and shredded coconut and serve with roti on the side. ➤

+

### ON THE SIDE

Try pairing this with a quick spiced vegetable pickle or kachumber salad.

+

**SWAP IT OUT**

For a pescatarian version, simply swap the pork for trout or barramundi fillets.

DF

# Pepper-crusted pork with crushed potatoes and fragrant spiced oil

SERVES 2 // PREP 10 MINS // COOK 30 MINS

| | |
|---|---|
| 500 | gm Dutch cream potatoes, scrubbed and quartered |
| 1 | tbsp coarsely crushed black pepper |
| 2 | pork cutlets (about 250gm each) |
| 20 | gm unsalted butter, chopped |
| 120 | ml extra-virgin olive oil |
| 2 | curry leaf sprigs |
| 1 | garlic clove, thinly sliced |
| 1 | tsp nigella seeds |
| ½ | tsp each cumin seeds, fennel seeds and mustard seeds |
| | Hot English mustard, to serve |

**1** Preheat oven to 200°C fan-forced. Place potatoes in a saucepan of cold salted water, bring to the boil over high heat and cook until tender (15-20 minutes). Drain, set aside to steam dry (2 minutes), then return to pan and shake to roughen edges.

**2** Meanwhile, place crushed black pepper on a plate. Brush pork cutlets with 2 tsp olive oil and press pork into pepper to coat, then set aside.

**3** Heat butter and 2 tbsp olive oil in an ovenproof frying pan over medium heat. Add curry leaves, garlic, spices and 1 tsp salt flakes; cook, stirring constantly, until fragrant and mustard seeds begin to pop (30 seconds to 1 minute). Remove from heat; carefully pour over potatoes and toss to coat.

**4** Wipe pan clean with paper towel. Add 2 tbsp oil to pan and return to medium heat. Add pork and cook until light golden (4-5 minutes each side). Transfer pan to oven and roast until pork is caramelised and just cooked through (5 minutes). Transfer pork to a plate to rest (5 minutes).

**5** Divide pork and potatoes among plates; serve with mustard on the side.

DF GF

# Spicy Sichuan chicken with rolled rice noodles

SERVES 4 // PREP 15 MINS // COOK 40 MINS (PLUS MARINATING)

| | |
|---|---|
| **1** | **chicken (about 1.5kg), butterflied and halved lengthways** |
| **200** | **gm shiitake mushrooms** |
| **2** | **bunches bok choy, halved lengthways** |
| **2** | **tbsp neutral-flavoured oil** |
| **400** | **gm rolled fresh rice noodles** |
| **1** | **tbsp coarsely chopped garlic chives** |
| | **GLAZE** |
| **180** | **ml (¾ cup) oyster sauce** |
| **2** | **tbsp soy sauce** |
| **2** | **tbsp Shaoxing wine** |
| **1** | **tsp crisp chilli oil, plus extra to serve** |
| **2** | **garlic cloves, crushed** |
| **1** | **tsp Sichuan peppercorns, coarsely crushed** |

**1** Preheat oven to 220°C fan-forced. For glaze, combine all ingredients in a large bowl; add the chicken and turn to coat. Set aside at room temperature to marinate (30 minutes).

**2** Place mushrooms in a large roasting pan, place chicken on top and pour 200ml water around chicken. Roast until chicken is golden and juices run clear when thickest part of thigh is pierced (25-30 minutes). Set aside to rest (10 minutes).

**3** Meanwhile, blanch bok choy in salted boiling water until just tender (2-3 minutes). Drain.

**4** Heat oil in a large frying pan over high heat. Add noodles and cook, turning, until golden and crisp (5-6 minutes).

**5** Arrange chicken, mushrooms and bok choy on a large serving platter and drizzle with resting juices. Scatter with garlic chives and serve with rice noodles and extra chilli crisp oil on the side. ➤

+

**SERVING SUGGESTION**

If you can't get your hands on fresh rolled rice noodles, simply serve with steamed jasmine rice.

# Salt and vinegar pan-fried chicken with soft polenta and capers

SERVES 4 // PREP 15 MINS// COOK 40 MINS

| | |
|---|---|
| **4** | **chicken thighs, skin on, bone in** |
| | **Seasoned flour, for dusting** |
| **1** | **tbsp extra-virgin olive oil** |
| **535** | **gm jar pickled onions, drained and halved** |
| **2** | **tbsp baby salted capers, rinsed** |
| **1** | **tbsp thyme, plus extra to serve** |
| **125** | **ml (½ cup) chicken stock** |
| **1** | **tbsp white wine vinegar** |
| **200** | **gm green beans, trimmed** |
| | **Parsley, finely grated lemon zest and lemon wedges, to serve** |
| | **SOFT POLENTA** |
| **1** | **litre (4 cups) milk** |
| **2** | **garlic cloves, crushed** |
| **180** | **gm instant polenta** |
| **40** | **gm (½ cup) finely grated parmesan** |
| **50** | **gm crème fraîche** |

**1** Preheat oven to 220°C fan-forced. Dust chicken in seasoned flour, shaking off excess. Heat oil in a large heavy-based ovenproof frying pan. Add chicken, skin-side down, and cook until skin is light golden (3-4 minutes). Turn chicken; add onions, capers, thyme, chicken stock and vinegar. Bring to a simmer. Transfer to the oven and roast until chicken is golden and cooked through (30 minutes). Add green beans to pan and cook until just tender (10 minutes).

**2** Meanwhile, for polenta, bring milk, garlic and 250ml water to a simmer in a saucepan over medium heat. Rain in polenta, whisking continuously until combined. Reduce heat to low and cook, stirring occasionally, until thick and smooth (6 minutes). Beat in parmesan and crème fraîche. Season to taste.

**3** Transfer chicken to serving dish. Scatter with parsley, lemon zest and extra thyme. Serve with polenta on the side.

GF

# Baked mocha and ricotta pudding with chocolate sauce

SERVES 4 // PREP 10 MINS // COOK 20 MINS

| | |
|---|---|
| **500** | **gm firm ricotta** |
| **2** | **eggs, separated** |
| **110** | **gm (½ cup) caster sugar** |
| **60** | **ml (¼ cup) thickened cream** |
| **60** | **ml (¼ cup) espresso-strength coffee** |
| **1** | **tsp vanilla extract** |
| **30** | **gm (¼ cup) almond flour** |
| **1** | **tbsp cornflour** |
| **¼** | **tsp baking powder** |
| | **Dutch-process cocoa, for dusting** |
| | **Vanilla ice-cream and chopped roasted almonds, to serve** |

**DARK CHOCOLATE SAUCE**

| | |
|---|---|
| **100** | **gm dark chocolate (54% cocoa solids), finely chopped** |
| **1** | **tbsp honey** |
| **180** | **ml (¾ cup) thickened cream** |

**1** Preheat oven to 160°C fan-forced. Place ricotta, yolks, sugar, cream, espresso and vanilla in a large bowl and stir to combine

**2** Sieve dry ingredients into a bowl and whisk to combine.

**3** Whisk egg whites in a bowl until stiff peaks form. Stir dry ingredients into wet ingredients, then gently fold through egg white, in three batches, until just combined. Divide among six, 250ml ceramic ovenproof dishes. Place on a large baking tray and bake until puffed and just set (20 minutes).

**4** Meanwhile, for chocolate sauce, place chocolate and honey in a small bowl. Place cream in a small saucepan and bring to a gentle simmer over medium-high heat. Pour over chocolate, stand to melt (3 minutes), then stir until smooth.

**5** Dust puddings with cocoa. Top with ice-cream, drizzle chocolate sauce and scatter with almonds to serve. ●

+

**MADE TO SHARE**

These melt-and-mix puddings are quick to prepare. We've used individual dishes for cosying up on the couch, but if you plan to share, use a 1.5-litre ceramic ovenproof dish and bake for 45 minutes.

FOUR WAYS WITH

# Roast potatoes

From the irresistible crunch of a classic roast spud to the softness of sweet potatoes, nothing spells comfort quite like a tray of roast potatoes.

## CLASSIC ROAST POTATOES

Preheat oven to 200°C fan-forced. Boil 6 peeled and halved pontiac potatoes (1.2kg) in salted boiling water until almost tender (5 minutes). Drain; cover with a tea towel to steam dry (3 minutes). Cool slightly and rake rounded side of potatoes with the tines of a fork. Place, cut-side down, in a single layer, in an oiled roasting pan. Add 8 unpeeled garlic cloves and ¼ cup rosemary sprigs around potaotes, drizzle with 80ml olive oil and dot with 50gm chopped unsalted butter. Roast for 50 minutes, turning, until golden. Season.

## SPICED CHAT POTATOES

Preheat oven to 200°C fan-forced. Halve 1kg baby chat potatoes and place in a roasting pan. Scatter potatoes lwith 2 tsp fennel seeds and 1 tsp smoked paprika, drizzle with 2 tbsp olive oil, season to taste and toss to coat. Roast, turning occassionally, until golden and tender (30-40 minutes). Scatter with extra smoked paprika and season generously to serve.

PHOTOGRAPHY JAMES MOFFATT & JOHN PAUL URIZAR.

## ROAST SWEET POTATOES

Preheat oven to 200°C fan-forced. Wash and scrub 1.2kg slender, small unpeeled orange sweet potatoes; pat dry with paper towel. Cut in half lengthways and place in a large roasting pan with 8 unpeeled garlic cloves and 6 thyme sprigs. Drizzle with 2 tbsp olive oil, season generously and roast, turning occassionally, until browned and tender (25-35 minutes).

## KIPFLER POTATOES

Preheat oven to 200°C fan-forced. Wash and scrub 1.2kg unpeeled kipfler potatoes; pat dry with paper towel. Cut in half lengthways and place in a large roasting pan with 2 halved bulbs garlic and the thinly peeled zest of 1 lemon. Drizzle with 2 tbsp olive oil, season and toss to coat. Roast, turning occasionally, until golden and tender (30-40 minutes). Scatter with extra lemon zest to serve.

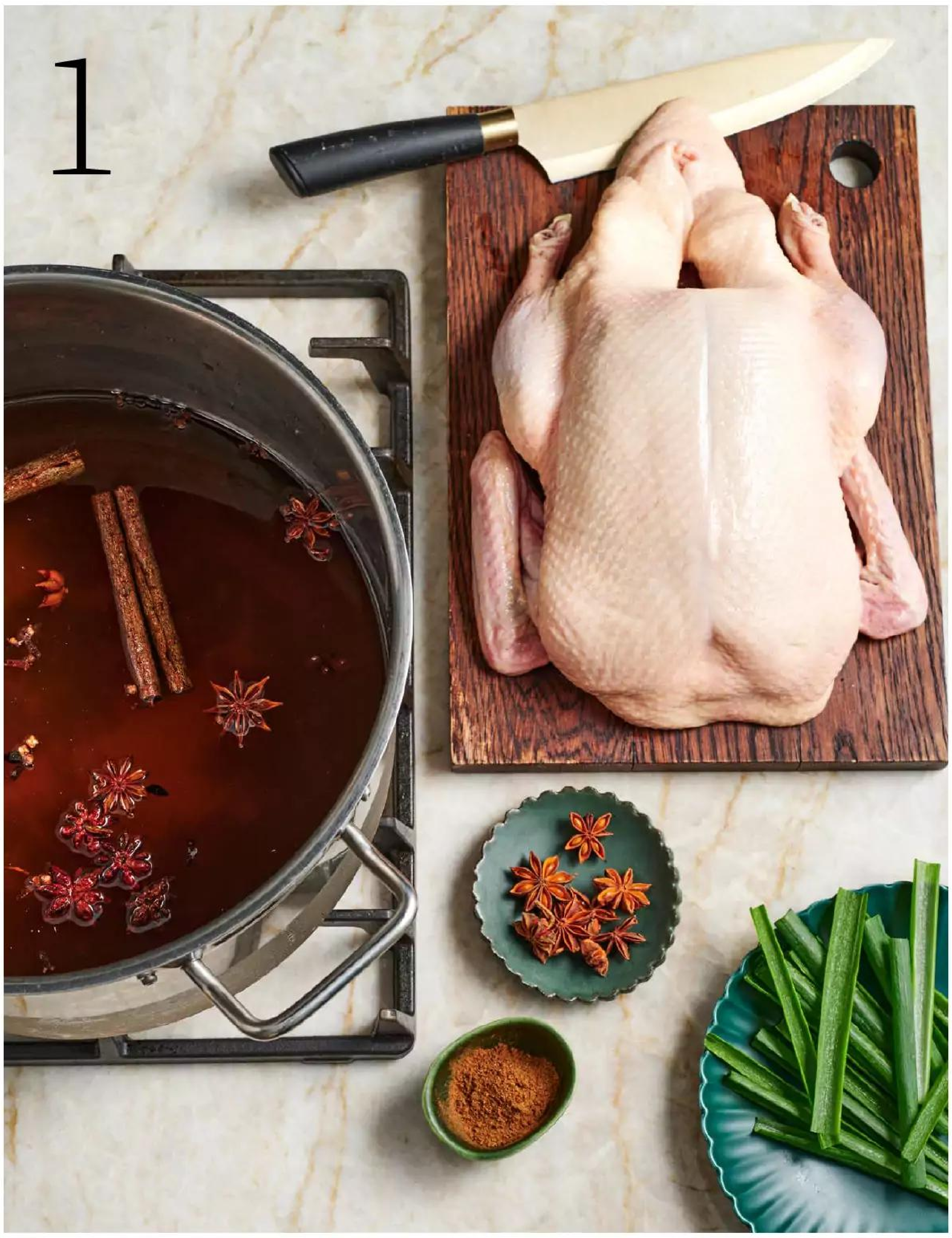
# Peking duck

It's a labour of love to create this beloved Chinese classic. Brisbane chef **LOUIS TIKARAM** shares the technique behind this statement dish.

CHEF LOUIS TIKARAM KNOWS HIS WAY AROUND A PEKING DUCK. "IT'S ONE of those dishes that when done right is probably the most perfect dish I have ever eaten," says Tikaram. The name given to one of Beijing's most famed dishes has also become the name for the breed of duck used in the classic, and the dish's hallmarks from its deep amber skin to its rendered fat are appreciated globally. At Tikaram's modern Cantonese fine-diner Stanley, it's been a staple of the menu since opening. "We designed the kitchen around this one dish with a whole room designed specifically for the cooking of ducks, custom stainless steel hanging racks and a cool room," says Tikaram. Alongside dishing out ducks at his own restaurant, Tikaram also cites Mr Wong in Sydney, Imperial Treasure in Singapore, Lung King Heen in Hong Kong and Billy's Pine and Bamboo in Brisbane as excellent spots to experience the dish. For those wanting to try it at home, patience is required, with the recipe taking four days, making it an ideal long weekend dish. "When you trust the process, the result is so special and an absolute showstopper."

**REQUEST A RECIPE**

To request a recipe from Australia's leading chefs and restaurants, email us at *askgourmet@aremedia.com.au*



## Step by step

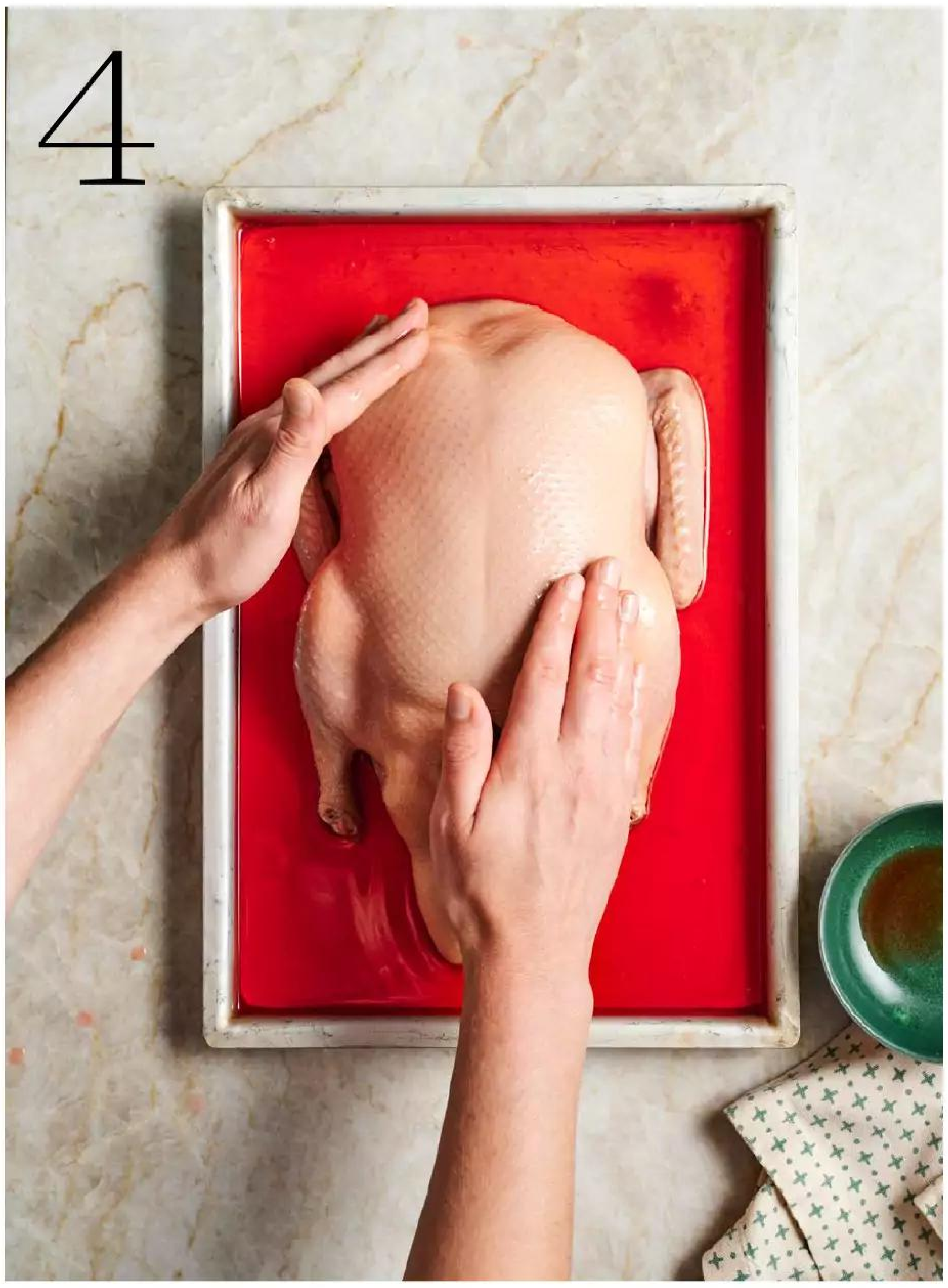
MAKES 20 PANCAKES // PREP 35 MINS //COOK 1HR (PLUS BRINING, DRYING )

**Start this recipe 4 days in advance.**

| | |
|---|---|
| **1.6** | **kg whole duck** |
| **4** | **spring onions, white and green parts separated** |
| **1** | **telegraph cucumber, cut into 10cm batons** |
| | **Hoisin sauce, to serve (see note)** |
| **20** | **frozen Peking duck pancake wrappers (see note)** |
| | **BRINE** |
| **25** | **gm cassia bark** |
| **20** | **gm star anise** |
| **1** | **tbsp each cloves, ground five-spice and Sichuan peppercorns** |
| **100** | **gm fine sea salt** |
| **55** | **gm (¼ cup) caster sugar** |
| | **GLAZE** |
| **500** | **ml (2 cups) Chinese red vinegar (see note)** |
| **250** | **gm liquid maltose (see note), warmed** |

1 Rinse duck inside and out with cold running water and pat dry with paper towel, then set aside.

PHOTOGRAPHY JAMES MOFFATT. STYLING ELISA BAKER. FOOD PREPARATION MAXWELL ADEY.



2 For brine, dry-roast spices in a very large saucepan over medium heat until fragrant (1 minutes). Add salt, sugar, green part of spring onions and 1 litre water and bring to the boil. Remove from heat. Add 4 litres cold water, stir to combine and set aside to cool. Once cool, submerge duck in brine, cover and refrigerate overnight to brine (12 hours).

3 For glaze, stir all ingredients in a saucepan over low heat until dissolved. Remove from heat; pour into a large deep roasting pan and cool to room temperature, then refrigerate to chill (2 hours).

4 Bring a wok or very large saucepan of water to the boil. Drain duck from brine, pat dry with paper towel. Carefully lower duck into boiling water to blanch (10 seconds), then immediately place into glaze, massaging and rubbing into skin, especially the breast, to coat. Stretch duck to remove any creases or wrinkles on the skin's surface that have formed. Place the duck, breast-side up, on a large rack set over a large oven tray and refrigerate to dry out (2-3 days).

5 To roast duck, remove duck from refrigerator and bring to room temperature (2 hours).

6 Preheat oven to 200°C fan-forced. Place duck on a clean rack set over an oven tray. Roast duck, rotating oven tray occasionally, until crisp and deep golden. Juices should run clear when thigh is pierced with skewer (50 minutes-1 hour; if legs and wings start to burn, cover with foil). Set duck aside to rest (20 minutes).

7 Using kitchen scissors, cut through the breastbone of duck, then remove the backbone to give you two halves. Using a sharp knife or cleaver, cut the breast from the rib cage and thickly slice on an angle. For legs, cut up the leg bone, around the knuckle and thigh bone, twisting, if necessary, to release the meat from the joints in one large piece. Trim to a rectangle and thickly slice. Repeat with remaining duck half.

8 While duck is resting, steam pancake wrappers in a steamer basket set over a saucepan of simmering water until warmed through (3-4 minutes). Remove from heat and set aside, covered, until ready to serve.

9 Slice white parts of spring onion into julienne. Arrange duck, hoisin, pancakes, cucumber and spring onion on a serving platter to serve.

**Note** Hoisin, wrappers, red vinegar and liquid maltose are available from Asian supermarkets. To heat liquid maltose, warm in microwave until malleable.

+

### CHEF RECOMMENDS

Louis Tikaram recommends Lee Kum Kee hoisin sauce and Happy Belly Peking duck wrappers. You can also make your own hoisin from scratch.

GOURMET TRAVELLER
JOURNEYS
GOURMET TRAVELLER
Cobram Estate
AUSTRALIAN EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OIL
Ultra Premium
PICUAL
MEDIUM INTENSITY
500mL

SUBSCRIBE OR RENEW TO

# GOURMET TRAVELLER LUXE

FOR JUST $149.99

Cobram Estate

VALUED OVER $340!

## YOUR MEMBERSHIP INCLUDES;

+ **12 ISSUES** of *Gourmet Traveller* magazine home delivered!
+ **12 MONTHS** of digital subscription access
+ ***Gourmet Traveller* Tote Bag**
+ **Riedel twin pack glassware**
+ **1 Cobram Estate Ultra Premium Extra Virgin Olive Oil**
+ **Exclusive pre-sale access and discounts** to *Gourmet Traveller* events
+ ***Gourmet Traveller Journeys* hard cover cookbook**
+ **Luxe member monthly newsletter and special offers**

**WWW.MAGSHOP.COM.AU/GMTLUXE OR ☎ 136 116 AND QUOTE M23GTLUXE**

Savings based on *Gourmet Traveller* cover price of $11.50. For full terms and conditions, visit magshop.com.au/GMTLUXE. Offer valid from October 2, 2024 to Australian residents only 18yrs or over. Subscription copies do not receive free gifts offered at retail. Please see contents page for location of our Privacy Notice. Our Privacy Policy can also be found at aremedia.com.au/privacy and includes important information about our collection, use and disclosure of your personal information (including the provision of targeted advertising based on your online activities). It explains that if you do not provide us with information we have requested from you, we may not be able to provide you with the goods and services you require. It also explains how you can access or seek correction of your personal information, how you can complain about a breach of the Australian Privacy Principles and how we will deal with a complaint of that nature. For full Magshop terms and conditions, please visit magshop.com.au/terms. You must supply a valid email address to receive certain benefits including the monthly newsletter, exclusive access to events and discounts. Please allow up to 6 weeks to receive your subscriber bonus gifts. This offer includes 1 Gourmet Traveller tote bag, 1 Cobram Estate Ultra Premium Extra Virgin Olive Oil, and the *Gourmet Traveller Journeys* hard cover cookbook. Please note each subscriber will receive a set of either champagne or wine glassware from Riedel. One gift per subscription. Additional styling props used on this creative are not included in your GT Luxe membership package.

Long weekends provide the perfect opportunity to host long, lazy lunches. Here *GT* shares the best recipes designed to share and savour.

# THE LONG LUNCH

**Smoked beetroot galette,** p93

PHOTOGRAPHY **ALICIA TAYLOR**
STYLING **OLIVIA BLACKMORE**
RECIPES **TAMIKA O'NEILL**

**Heirloom carrots and whipped feta** Concorde leather dining armchairs from Life Interiors, used throughout. Scout cutlery from Few & Far. All other props stylist's own.

**Heirloom carrot and mandarin salad,** p96

**Whipped feta with hot honey,** p90

# Five-herb no-knead focaccia

SERVES 10-12 // PREP 30 MINS // COOK 30 MINS (PLUS STANDING, PROVING)

**Instead of kneading, this recipe calls for the stretching and folding that's more typical with sourdough – a practice that requires time rather than exertion. Serve with a dollop of our whipped feta dip with hot honey (below) for an easy starter.**

| | |
|---|---|
| **560** | **gm strong bread flour** |
| **7** | **gm dried yeast** |
| **80** | **ml (⅓ cup) extra-virgin olive oil, plus extra for drizzling** |
| **⅓** | **cup chopped herbs (such as rosemary, sage, dill, parsley and thyme)** |
| **3** | **garlic cloves, chopped** |

**1** For dough, combine flour, yeast and 470ml lukewarm water in a large bowl; cover and stand for 15 minutes.

**2** Add 1 tbsp oil and 2 tsp fine sea salt to dough; mix until a shaggy dough forms. Using damp hands, stretch one side of the dough up, then fold to the opposite side. Repeat three times, rotating bowl as you go. Cover and stand to rest (30 minutes). Repeat stretching, folding and standing two more times. Cover and refrigerate overnight to prove (12 hours).

**3** Bring dough to room temperature (2 hours). Drizzle 2 tbsp oil over base of a 24cm cast-iron pan. With oiled hands, press and spread the dough to edges of pan. Cover and stand in a warm place until doubled in size (2 hours).

**4** Preheat oven to 220°C fan-forced. With lightly oiled hands, press down on the dough to create dimples, being careful not to remove too many air bubbles. Scatter with herbs, garlic and 1 tbsp sea salt flakes. Drizzle with remaining oil. Bake until golden and puffed (25-30 minutes).

**5** Stand for 5 minutes, then cut into slices. Serve alongside whipped feta with hot honey (see recipe below).

# Whipped feta with hot honey

SERVES 6-8 // PREP 10 MINS // COOK 5 MINS

**A trio of dairy – yoghurt, feta and cream cheese – is the secret combination in this whipped cheese dip. Adorned with toasted pecans, prismatic honeycomb and a drizzle of chilli-infused hot honey, we suggest mopping up all the goodness with our warm focaccia (above).**

| | |
|---|---|
| **200** | **gm Danish feta** |
| **140** | **gm (½ cup) Greek-style yoghurt** |
| **100** | **gm softened cream cheese, chopped** |
| **1** | **garlic clove, crushed** |
| | **Finely grated zest and juice of ½ lemon** |
| **60** | **gm honeycomb, crumbled** |
| | **Micro parsley, to serve** |
| | **HOT CHILLI HONEY** |
| **80** | **ml (⅓ cup) floral honey** |
| **2** | **tbsp mixed dried chilli flakes (such as arbol, Aleppo and chipotle chillies)** |
| **½** | **tsp sweet paprika** |
| **2** | **tbsp apple cider vinegar** |
| **2** | **tbsp toasted pecans, chopped** |

**1** For hot chilli honey, place honey, chilli flakes and paprika in a small saucepan over low heat; cook, stirring to infuse (5 minutes). Remove from heat; stir in vinegar and chopped pecans, and set aside.

**2** Combine feta, yoghurt, cream cheese, garlic, lemon zest and juice in a food processor and process until smooth. Season with pepper.

**3** Spoon whipped feta onto a platter; drizzle with hot chilli honey, top with honeycomb and micro parsley. Serve with focaccia (see above) on the side. ➤

**Beetroot galette**
Scout cutlery from Few & Far. All other props stylist's own.

**Heirloom carrot and mandarin salad,** p96

# Smoked beetroot galette

SERVES 6-8 AS AN ENTRÉE // PREP 35 MINS //COOK 1 HR 20 MINS (PLUS CHILLING, COOLING, STANDING)

**The rainbow of autumn hues in this beetroot tart makes it a show-stopping second course in our long lunch menu. We suggest making the pastry from scratch, but if short on time, use Carême sour cream shortcrust pastry.**

| | |
|---|---|
| **1** | **egg, lightly beaten** |
| **1½** | **tbsp bagel seasoning** |
| | **Micro red vein sorrel, to serve** |
| | **ROASTED BEETROOT** |
| **4** | **bunches heirloom baby beetroot, scrubbed and stalks trimmed to 2cm** |
| **4** | **golden shallots, peeled** |
| **4** | **unpeeled garlic cloves** |
| **4** | **thyme sprigs** |
| **40** | **gm unsalted butter, chopped** |
| **1** | **tbsp liquid smoke (see note)** |
| **2** | **tbsp extra-virgin olive oil** |
| **1½** | **tbsp vincotto** |
| | **SPELT PASTRY** |
| **120** | **gm spelt flour** |
| **75** | **gm (½ cup) plain flour** |
| **60** | **gm finely grated parmesan** |
| **125** | **gm chilled unsalted butter, grated** |
| **1½** | **tsp fennel seeds** |
| | **GOAT'S CHEESE FILLING** |
| **200** | **gm soft goat's cheese** |
| **40** | **gm finely grated parmesan** |
| **2** | **tbsp chopped dill, plus extra sprigs to serve** |

**1** For roasted beetroot, preheat oven to 200°C fan-forced. Place a large piece of foil (about 40cm x 40cm) on a baking tray; arrange beetroot, shallots, garlic, thyme, butter, liquid smoke and half olive oil in a single layer on foil, season and wrap tightly to enclose. Roast until beetroot and shallots are tender (40-45 minutes). Stand to cool slightly. Peel beetroot. Cut beetroot and shallots into wedges and halves; transfer to a bowl with vincotto and remaining olive oil, toss to coat and season. Reserve whole roasted garlic for goat's cheese filling.

**2** Meanwhile, for pastry, combine flours, parmesan and ½ tsp sea salt flakes in a bowl, rub butter to form coarse crumbs, then stir in fennel seeds and 60ml iced water. Lightly knead with hands until dough comes together. Wrap in plastic wrap and refrigerate until chilled (1 hour). Roll out between 2 sheets of baking paper to a rough 30cm round. Transfer to an oven tray lined with baking paper and refrigerate until firm (1 hour).

**3** For goat's cheese filling, combine all ingredients in a bowl. Squeeze roast garlic from its skins, mash with a fork, then stir through filling. Season.

**4** Reduce oven to 180°C fan-forced. Place a heavy oven tray in oven to heat. Spread filling over pastry round, leaving a 4cm border. Arrange beetroot mixture on top, fold uncovered edges over, pinching slightly to seal. Brush pastry edge with beaten egg, then scatter with bagel seasoning. Carefully transfer to preheated oven tray and bake until pastry is golden brown (25-35 minutes). Stand to cool slightly (15 minutes), then cut into wedges, drizzle with extra oil and serve scattered with herbs.

**Note** Liquid smoke is available from select barbecue retailers or online. ➤

# Slow-roasted pork neck with celeriac mash and pickled apple

SERVES 6-8 // PREP 35 MINS // COOK 3 HRS (PLUS DRYING)

**Long weekends call for slow-roasted pork. We've paired it with a garlicky root vegetable mash for mopping up the cider-infused gravy, while spiced apples bring warmth to the dish. Begin this recipe a day ahead.**

| | |
|---|---|
| **2** | **tsp fennel seeds** |
| **4** | **anchovies** |
| **2** | **garlic cloves, chopped** |
| **80** | **ml (⅓ cup) extra-virgin olive oil** |
| **1** | **piece pork neck (2.6kg), skin scored** |
| **2** | **Spanish onions, cut into thick rounds** |
| **2** | **garlic bulbs, halved horizontally** |
| **500** | **ml (2 cups) chicken stock** |
| **660** | **ml apple cider** |
| **1** | **tbsp brown sugar** |
| **6** | **baby red apples (such as mini royal gala)** |
| **1** | **½ tbsp plain flour** |
| **1** | **tsp Dijon mustard** |
| | **Broad bean sprouts, to serve** |
| | **POTATO-CELERIAC MASH** |
| **500** | **gm Dutch cream potatoes, chopped into 3cm pieces** |
| **500** | **gm celeriac, chopped into 2cm pieces** |
| **3** | **garlic cloves, coarsely chopped** |
| **500** | **ml (2 cups) chicken stock** |
| **100** | **gm unsalted butter, chopped** |
| **60** | **ml (¼ cup) hot milk** |
| | **PICKLED APPLE** |
| **250** | **ml (1 cup) apple cider vinegar** |
| **55** | **gm (¼ cup) caster sugar** |
| **1** | **cinnamon stick** |
| **2** | **star anise** |
| **4** | **small red apples (such as royal gala), thinly sliced on a mandolin** |
| **3** | **golden shallots, thinly sliced on a mandolin** |

**1** Dry-roast fennel seeds in a small frying pan over low heat until fragrant (2-3 minutes). Transfer to a mortar and pestle and pound until coarsely crushed. Add anchovies, garlic and 2 tsp sea salt flakes and pound to a coarse paste; stir in 2 tbsp olive oil.

**2** To butterfly pork neck, place pork skin-side down on a board and cut from the centre horizontally outwards, cutting halfway through the meat, to create an extended flap, then open up and repeat with other side. Rub fennel mixture into flesh, then roll sides over to enclose. Tie securely with kitchen string, place on a tray and refrigerate overnight to dry out skin.

**3** Bring pork to room temperature (3 hours). Preheat oven to 150°C fan-forced. Using a Stanley knife, score skin at 3mm intervals (see note). Rub 2 tbsp olive oil and 1 tbsp sea salt flakes into cuts. Arrange onion and garlic in centre of a large, deep-sided roasting pan; place pork on top. Combine 375ml stock, half the cider and sugar in a jug; pour into roasting pan around pork, cover with aluminium foil and roast until pork is fork tender (2-2½ hours).

**4** Meanwhile, for mash, place potatoes, celeriac, garlic, stock and 300ml cold water in a saucepan; bring to the boil over high heat. Reduce heat to medium; cook, partially covered, until tender (20-25 minutes). Drain; cover with a tea towel to steam dry (2 minutes). Return to pan; mash with a potato masher until smooth. Add butter and milk and beat until fluffy. Season to taste.

**5** For pickled apple, combine vinegar, sugar, spices, 1 tsp fine sea salt and 250ml water in a small saucepan; bring to the boil. Place apple and shallots in a heatproof bowl, pour over pickling liquid and set aside to cool. Strain just before serving.

**6** Increase oven to 220°C fan-forced. Arrange apples in pan around pork and roast, uncovered, until crackling forms and apples are tender when pierced with a sharp knife (20-25 minutes). Transfer pork and apples to a plate to rest (30 minutes); set roasting pan aside for gravy.

**7** Strain fat from roasting pan. Squeeze garlic from their skins into pan juices and place over medium heat. Whisk in flour until a smooth paste forms, then cook, stirring, until sandy (2-3 minutes). Whisk in remaining apple cider, remaining stock and mustard and cook, stirring, until sauce is slightly thickened (5-6 minutes). Season to taste.

**8** Transfer pork to a board and carve. Spoon celeriac mash onto serving plates, top with pork, roast apples and pickled apples. Drizzle with gravy and scatter with broad bean sprouts to serve.

**Note** Ask your butcher to score the pork skin for you. If your crackling doesn't form, place the pork roast on a wire rack in a deep-sided roasting pan. Heat 250ml (1 cup) vegetable oil until almost smoking and pour over pork skin to crackle (be careful, hot oil will spit). ➤

**Pork** Ceramic bowls (with apples) from The DEA Store. All other props stylist's own.

# Heirloom carrot and mandarin salad

SERVES 6-8 // PREP 20 MINS

**Carrot and citrus is a classic combo. We've gone with mandarin as it doesn't require intricate knife work. A coriander seed dressing adds another layer of floral citrus notes to this salad.**
Pictured p89

| | |
|---|---|
| **1** | **bunch heirloom Dutch carrots, thinly sliced on a mandolin** |
| **1** | **baby fennel, thinly sliced on a mandolin** |
| **4** | **heirloom radishes, thinly sliced on a mandolin** |
| **1** | **radicchio, leaves separated** |
| **1** | **witlof, leaves separated** |
| **1** | **cup (loosely packed) soft herbs, such as parsley, dill and chives** |
| **2** | **mandarins, such as Imperial or Hickson, peeled and segmented** |
| | **CORIANDER SEED VINAIGRETTE** |
| **1½** | **tbsp coriander seeds, coarsely crushed** |
| **½** | **tsp ground allspice** |
| **3** | **tsp Champagne vinegar** |
| **3** | **tsp honey** |
| | **Juice of 1 lemon** |
| **125** | **ml (½ cup) extra-virgin olive oil** |

**1** For coriander seed vinaigrette, place all ingredients in a screw-top jar, season and shake well to combine.
**2** Place carrot, fennel, radish, radicchio, witlof and herbs in iced water to crisp (10 minutes). Drain well, spin in a salad spinner or pat dry with paper towel. Transfer to a large bowl with mandarin; dress with vinaigrette. Transfer to a serving platter to serve.

# Brioche bread and butter pudding with hazelnut crumble and roasted plums

SERVES 8-10 // PREP 20 MINS // COOK 1 HR (PLUS SOAKING)

**This version of bread and butter pudding uses brioche for extra buttery indulgence. A nutty crumble and slightly sour blood plums balance the richness.**

| | |
|---|---|
| **400** | **gm braided brioche, coarsely torn** |
| | **Vanilla bean ice-cream, to serve** |
| | **CUSTARD** |
| **6** | **eggs** |
| **70** | **gm caster sugar** |
| **600** | **ml milk** |
| **2** | **tsp vanilla paste** |
| **1** | **tsp ground cinnamon** |
| | **FRANGELICO PLUMS** |
| **10** | **blood plums (about 850gm), stones removed, cut into wedges** |
| **2** | **tbsp Frangelico** |
| | **HAZELNUT CRUMBLE** |
| **40** | **gm plain flour** |
| **40** | **gm unsalted butter, chilled and cut into 1cm cubes** |
| **140** | **gm (1 cup) lightly toasted hazelnuts** |
| **25** | **gm demerara sugar** |

**1** For Frangelico plums, combine ingredients in a bowl and set aside to macerate (15 minutes).
**2** For custard, whisk eggs, sugar, milk, vanilla, cinnamon and ¼ tsp sea salt flakes in a large jug to combine.
**3** Arrange brioche in a lightly greased 25cm x 22cm x 5cm-deep baking dish. Add plums, toss to combine, then pour over custard and set aside to soak (1 hour).
**4** Preheat oven to 170°C fan-forced. For hazelnut crumble, place flour in a bowl, rub in butter with fingertips until clumps form, then stir in hazelnuts and sugar.
**5** Sprinkle crumble over pudding and bake until golden and custard is firm (55-60 minutes). Serve immediately or at room temperature with vanilla ice-cream on the side. ●

# Give a fig

The autumn harvest of figs calls for sweet and savoury dishes that take advantage of the luscious nectar and vibrant leaf of this glorious fruit – perfect for a long weekend of feasting.

PHOTOGRAPHY **BRETT STEVENS**
RECIPES AND STYLING **MAXWELL ADEY**
FOOD PREPARATION **CAITLYN MCGRATH**

**Pudding** Japanese oxidised copper tray in Red and round copper plate, both from The DEA Store. Laminex TrueScale Woodgrain in Sepia Walnut, used throughout. All other props stylist's own.

**Sticky fig pudding with tahini butterscotch and fig leaf ice-cream,** p106

**Baked brie and Saganaki** Syunsuke Tanaka Bean forks in Brass and Copper and Sutoa Nata Japanese cherrywood spoon, both from The DEA Store. Wooden knives from Gail Clayton Design. Cheese from Simon Johnson. All other props stylist's own.

## Fig leaf-baked brie with pickled figs and fennel seed fougasse

SERVES 6-8 AS A STARTER // PREP 1 HR 15 MINS // COOK 50 MINS (PLUS PROVING, COOLING)

**Encasing brie in a fig leaf before baking infuses it with a subtle fruity flavour. Its ideal accompaniment? A chewy spelt fougasse for dipping and peppered pickled fig, which offsets the rich and nutty qualities of the oozy cheese. Start this recipe 1 day ahead.**

| | |
|---|---|
| **1** | **large edible fig leaf (see note)** |
| **400** | **gm triple-cream brie, such as Fromagerie Rouzaire Coulommiers** |
| **1** | **garlic clove, thinly sliced** |
| **1** | **tbsp thyme, plus extra to serve** |
| | **FOUGASSE DOUGH** |
| **300** | **gm (2 cups) baker's flour** |
| **100** | **gm spelt flour** |
| **¼** | **tsp dried yeast** |
| | **Extra-virgin olive oil, for brushing** |
| | **Fennel seeds and sea salt flakes, for sprinkling** |
| | **PICKLED FIGS** |
| **1½** | **tbsp each Sherry vinegar and white wine vinegar** |
| **2** | **tsp caster sugar** |
| **½** | **tsp crushed pepperberries** |
| **4** | **figs, cut into sixths lengthways** |

**1** For fougasse dough, combine flours, yeast and 300ml tepid water in a large bowl until a shaggy dough forms; cover and set aside to prove (1 hour). Combine 1 tbsp warm water with 8gm fine sea salt in a small bowl and set aside to dissolve. Add salt water to dough; using your hands, mix to combine, then cover and set aside to prove (1 hour).

**2** Knock back dough. Stretch and fold dough four times, then cover and set aside to prove (1 hour). Repeat stretching, folding and proving three times. Cover and refrigerate overnight to prove.

**3** Bring dough to room temperature (2 hours). Preheat oven to 230°C fan-forced. To shape dough, divide into four portions and roll into balls. Working with one portion of dough at a time, lightly press down and shape into a 15cm long oval. Using the image as a guide, cut incisions in each with floured sharp scissors and carefully pull apart to open slightly, then transfer to trays lined with baking paper. Brush generously with olive oil and sprinkle with fennel seeds and sea salt. Bake fougasse until golden (15-18 minutes). Cool on trays.

**4** Meanwhile, for pickled figs, combine all ingredients in a bowl and gently toss to coat. Set aside to quick-pickle (15-20 minutes).

**5** For baked brie, reduce oven to 180°C fan-forced. Score top of cheese, 2cm deep, in a diamond pattern and stud with garlic slices and thyme. Place a large fig leaf in a small shallow ovenproof bowl (about 12cm diameter), top with brie and bake until soft and oozing (25-30 minutes). Transfer baked brie to a serving platter. Scatter brie with extra thyme and serve with pickled figs and fougasse for dipping on the side.

**Note** Edible fig leaves are available from farmers' markets; small fig trees are available from nurseries, or can be foraged. If unavailable, omit.

## Saganaki with burnt honey, roasted hazelnuts and marinated figs

SERVES 4-6 AS PART OF A CHEESE BOARD // PREP 10 MINS // COOK 5 MINS

**The perfect entrée is fast to prepare, tastes delicious and looks beautiful on the table. Pair with our baked brie (left) for an indulgent take on a cheese board.**

| | |
|---|---|
| **1** | **tbsp olive oil** |
| **250** | **gm haloumi, cut into 8 slices crossways** |
| **100** | **gm honey** |
| | **Juice of 1 lemon** |
| **50** | **gm roasted hazelnuts, chopped** |
| | **MARINATED FIGS** |
| **3** | **figs, cut into wedges** |
| **80** | **ml (⅓ cup) extra-virgin olive oil** |
| **1** | **small garlic clove, crushed** |
| **½** | **tsp each fennel seed and chilli flakes** |
| **1** | **oregano sprig, leaves stripped, plus extra to serve** |
| | **Thinly peeled zest of 1 lemon** |

**1** For marinated figs, combine all ingredients in a bowl, season, then gently toss to coat and stand to marinate (20 minutes).

**2** Heat olive oil in cast-iron frying pan over medium-high heat. Add cheese and cook until golden (2 minutes each side). Remove cheese from pan and drain on paper towel. Wipe pan clean. Add honey to pan and return to medium-high heat. Cook, stirring, until caramelised (1-2 minutes). Remove from heat; add lemon juice and 1 tbsp water and swirl to combine. Return cheese to pan and turn to coat. Transfer haloumi and burnt honey to a serving bowl; top with marinated figs, drizzle with marinade oil, scatter with hazelnuts and extra oregano to serve. ➤

# Lamb, fig and fillo pot pies with feta skordalia

SERVES 8 // PREP 45 MINS // COOK 4 HRS 30 MINS (PLUS COOLING)

**Moussaka meets shepherd's pie in this take on pot pies, designed to share, one between two.**

| | |
|---|---|
| **2** | **small eggplants (300gm each), thinly sliced** |
| **80** | **ml (⅓ cup) olive oil** |
| **12** | **fillo sheets** |
| **200** | **gm unsalted butter, melted** |
| | **Rigani (Greek dried oregano) and white sesame seeds, for sprinkling** |
| **300** | **gm baby green beans, trimmed, halved on an angle** |
| **2** | **tbsp coarsely chopped roasted walnuts** |
| **1** | **tsp finely chopped dill, plus extra to serve** |
| **1** | **tbsp extra-virgin olive oil** |
| | **Finely grated zest of ½ lemon, plus 2 tsp juice** |
| | **BRAISED LAMB SHANKS** |
| **2** | **tbsp extra-virgin olive oil** |
| **4** | **lamb shanks (about 1.6kg)** |
| **1** | **onion, thinly sliced** |
| **4** | **garlic cloves, finely chopped** |
| **100** | **gm tomato paste** |
| **250** | **ml (1 cup) red wine** |
| **750** | **ml (3 cups) chicken stock** |
| **8** | **thyme sprigs** |
| **2** | **bay leaves** |
| **2** | **small cinnamon sticks** |
| **6** | **each whole cloves and allspice berries** |
| **4** | **dried Turkish figs, cut into eighths lengthways** |
| **2** | **tbsp red wine vinegar** |
| | **FETA SKORDALIA** |
| **800** | **gm sebago potatoes, peeled and coarsely chopped** |
| **5** | **peeled garlic cloves** |
| **60** | **ml (¼ cup) extra-virgin olive oil** |
| **200** | **gm marinated Persian feta, drained and crumbled** |

**1** For braised shanks, preheat oven to 140°C fan-forced. Heat half the oil in a large casserole over high heat. Season shanks, add to casserole and cook, turning, until browned (10 minutes). Remove from casserole. Reduce heat to medium. Add onion, garlic and remaining oil, and cook, stirring occasionally, until softened (4-5 minutes). Add tomato paste, and cook, stirring, until colour deepens (1 minute). Deglaze with wine, scraping base of casserole, until reduced by half. Add stock, herbs, spices, figs and vinegar; bring to the boil. Return shanks, season, cover and braise in oven, turning once halfway through cooking, until meat is fork tender (2½ -3 hours).

**2** Remove shanks from braising liquid, set aside to cool slightly, then coarsely shred meat and place in bowl (discard bones). Skim fat from surface of braising liquid; strain through a sieve into a frying pan (discard whole spices and reserve solids), bring to a simmer over medium-high heat, then reduce until sauce is thickened (9-10 minutes). Add sauce and reserved solids to bowl with lamb, turn to coat and season.

**3** For feta skordalia, place potato and garlic in a saucepan, cover with lightly salted cold water, bring to the boil and cook until tender (10-12 minutes), drain, cover with a tea towel to steam dry. Return to pan, mash with a potato masher until smooth. Stir in olive oil and beat in feta until smooth. Season with pepper and set aside.

**4** Preheat oven to 180°C fan-forced. Place eggplant in colander, season with salt, toss to coat; set aside to drain.

**5** Pat eggplant dry with paper towel. Heat 2 tbsp olive oil in a frying pan over medium-high heat. Add half the eggplant and cook, turning occasionally, until golden (3-4 minutes). Transfer to plate lined with paper towel to drain. Repeat with remaining oil and eggplant.

**6** Divide lamb mixture among four, 600ml heatproof dishes. Layer eggplant and skordalia evenly on top. Place one fillo sheet on a clean work surface, brush with melted butter, fold in half and gently scrunch. Repeat with remaining fillo. Arrange fillo on top of dishes, brush with extra butter, sprinkle with rigani and sesame seeds and bake until fillo is golden (25-30 minutes); stand for 5 minutes before serving.

**7** Blanch beans in a saucepan of salted boiling water (2 minutes). Drain. Transfer to a bowl with walnuts, dill, oil, lemon zest and juice, season; toss to combine.

**8** Serve pies with beans on the side. ➤

**Fig, fennel and grain salad with citrus dressing and spiced seeds,** p105

**Chicken** Large Pebble bowl in Dust from Mud Australia. Goa cutlery in Blue from Cutipol. All other props stylist's own.

# Fig leaf-stuffed chicken on saffron rice with fig shirazi

SERVES 4 AS A MAIN // PREP 30 MINS // COOK 1 HR 15 MINS (MARINATING, STANDING, RESTING)

**Marinating the chicken in yoghurt tenderises the meat and allows the earthy spices to punctuate. We've roasted it on a bed of Iranian-inspired jewelled saffron rice, its flavour enriched as it absorbs the chicken juices.**

**1 whole chicken (about 1.5kg)**
**4 young edible fig leaves (see note p101)**
**100 gm Greek-style yoghurt**
**6 garlic cloves, crushed**
**3 tsp each ground cumin, ground coriander and sumac**
**½ tsp ground rose petals, plus extra whole petals to serve**
**2 tbsp pomegranate molasses**
**1 tbsp honey**
**500 ml (2 cups) chicken stock**
**Large pinch of saffron threads, soaked in 125ml boiling water**
**2 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil, plus extra for drizzling**
**1 large onion, thinly sliced**
**40 gm unsalted butter, chopped**
**1 cinnamon stick**
**6 cardamom pods, bruised**
**4 whole cloves**
**300 gm (1½ cups) basmati rice, rinsed**
**12 dried wild figs (75 gm), halved (we used Pariya)**
**¼ cup barberries**
**Chopped pistachios, to serve**

**LEMON-LIME YOGHURT**
**200 gm Greek-style yoghurt**
**Finely grated zest of ½ each lemon and lime**

**FIG SHIRAZI**
**1 Small Spanish onion, thinly sliced into rounds**
**2 small Lebanese cucumber, thinly sliced into rounds**
**2 figs, cut into wedges**
**2 small radishes, thinly sliced into rounds**
**2 tsp sumac, plus extra to serve**
**½ tsp dried mint**
**1 tbsp lime juice**
**2 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil**
**1 cup (loosely-packed) parsley and mint, plus extra to serve**

**1** Rinse chicken and cavity under cold running water and pat dry with paper towel. Stuff cavity with fig leaves and truss legs. Combine yoghurt, half the garlic, half the ground spices and ground rose petals in a non-reactive bowl, add chicken and turn to coat. Cover; refrigerate overnight to marinate.

**2** Bring chicken to room temperature before roasting (1 hour). Preheat oven to 200°C fan-forced. Add saffron to stock and soak liquid in a saucepan over low heat until hot.

**3** Wipe yoghurt marinade off chicken with paper towel, drizzle with oil and season. Heat olive oil in a large casserole over medium heat. Add onion and cook, stirring occasionally, until softened (5-7 minutes). Add butter, remaining garlic and whole spices, and cook, stirring, until fragrant (1-2 minutes). Add rice, figs and barberries, season and stir to coat. Create a well in centre of rice, place chicken in well, then carefully pour hot stock around chicken. Cover with a tight-fitting lid or two layers of aluminium foil. Transfer to oven and bake for 45 minutes.

**4** Combine pomegranate molasses, honey and remaining ground spices in a bowl. Remove casserole from oven, brush with pomegranate glaze, then bake, uncovered, until deep golden and juices run clear when thickest part of thigh is pierced (15-20 minutes). Set chicken aside to rest (15 minutes).

**5** For lemon-lime yoghurt, combine all ingredients in a small bowl and season. For fig shirazi, place all ingredients in a bowl, season and toss to combine.

**6** Scatter chicken with pistachios, mint and rose petals. Serve with lemon-lime yoghurt and fig shirazi on the side.

# Fig, fennel and grain salad with citrus dressing and spiced seeds

SERVES 4-6 AS A SIDE // PREP 20 MINS // COOK 45 MINS (PLUS COOLING)

**A take on the ever-popular Cypriot grain salad, our version makes the most of seasonal autumn produce with the addition of figs, pomegranate and fennel. Serve as a side with spiced baked fish or slow-roasted lamb shoulder.**

**100 gm farro**
**100 gm black barley**
**2 400 gm can chickpeas, drained and rinsed**
**1 small Spanish onion, thinly sliced into rounds**
**2 small baby fennels, fronds reserved, thinly sliced on a mandolin**
**3 small radishes, thinly sliced on a mandolin**
**2 cups (loosely packed) soft herbs, such as mint, dill and parsley**
**5 black figs, thickly sliced into rounds**
**1 pomegranate, arils removed**

**SPICED SEEDS**
**1½ tbsp each pepitas, white sesame seeds and sunflower seeds**
**1 tbsp coriander seeds, coarsely crushed**
**2 tsp cumin seeds, coarsely crushed**

**CITRUS DRESSING**
**1 small garlic clove, crushed**
**125 ml (½ cup) extra-virgin olive oil**
**Finely grated zest of 1 lemon, plus 2 tbsp juice**
**Finely grated zest of 1 lime, plus 2 tbsp juice**
**Finely grated zest of 1 orange, plus 2 tbsp juice**

**1** Preheat oven to 160°C fan-forced. Cook farro and barley in a large saucepan of salted boiling water until tender (40-45 minutes). Drain; transfer to a large bowl with chickpeas and refrigerate to cool (45 minutes).

**2** Meanwhile, for spiced seeds, combine all ingredients on a small oven tray lined with baking paper. Roast until golden (15-20 minutes). Set aside to cool.

**3** For citrus dressing, combine all ingredients in a sealable jar, season and shake to combine.

**4** Place onion, fennel, radish, herbs in a bowl of iced water to crisp (10 minutes). Drain; spin dry in a salad spinner or pat dry with a clean tea towel, then add to bowl with grain mixture. Dress with half the dressing.

**5** Arrange salad and figs on a large serving platter; drizzle with remaining dressing, top with pomegranate and scatter with spiced seeds to serve. ➤

# Sticky fig pudding with tahini butterscotch and fig leaf ice-cream

SERVES 8 // PREP 50 MINS // COOK 1 HR (PLUS INFUSING, STANDING)

**We've swapped dates for figs in this take on a sticky date pudding. The result? A more fruity pudding. Tahini and toasted sesame in the sauce add nuttiness to round out the caramel. We suggest making the fig leaf ice-cream, but vanilla ice-cream would suffice.**

| | |
|---|---|
| **3** | **figs, cut into thin wedges** |
| **1½** | **tbsp maple syrup** |
| | **FIG LEAF ICE-CREAM** |
| **500** | **ml (2 cups) thickened cream** |
| **200** | **ml milk** |
| **150** | **gm caster sugar** |
| **6** | **young edible fig leaves (see note p101)** |
| **7** | **egg yolks** |
| | **PUDDING BATTER** |
| | **Unsalted butter, greasing** |
| **200** | **gm dried figs, coarsely chopped** |
| **½** | **tsp bicarbonate of soda** |
| **220** | **gm Greek-style yoghurt** |
| **120** | **gm brown sugar** |
| **125** | **gm unsalted butter, melted** |
| **3** | **eggs, at room temperature** |
| | **Finely grated zest and juice of 1 orange** |
| **275** | **gm self-raising flour, sifted** |
| **1** | **tsp ground cinnamon** |
| | **TAHINI BUTTERSCOTCH SAUCE** |
| **200** | **gm caster sugar** |
| **200** | **ml pouring cream** |
| **60** | **gm chopped cold unsalted butter** |
| **60** | **gm hulled tahini** |
| **2** | **tbsp toasted sesame seeds** |

**1** For fig leaf ice-cream, heat cream, milk and half the sugar in a saucepan over medium heat until just simmering. Add fig leaves, remove from heat and set aside to infuse (1 hour or refrigerate overnight for stronger flavour). Strain cream mixture in a clean saucepan and bring to a gentle simmer. Whisk egg yolks and remaining sugar in a bowl until pale and thick. Gradually add hot cream mixture, whisk continuously, until combined. Return custard to saucepan over medium heat. Cook, stirring frequently, until mixture coats the back of a spoon (5-6 minutes). Strain custard into a bowl placed over a bowl of ice to chill, then freeze using an ice-cream machine according to manufacturer's instructions. Makes 1 litre.

**2** For pudding, preheat oven to 160°C fan-forced. Grease a 1.75-litre (7 cups) round ceramic baking dish with butter. Place dried figs, bicarbonate of soda and 125ml boiling water in a heatproof bowl, cover with a plate and stand to soften (15 minutes). Transfer to a food processor and process to a purée; add yoghurt, sugar, butter, eggs, orange zest and juice, then process until smooth. Transfer to a large bowl; add dry ingredients and whisk to combine. Spoon into prepared baking dish, arrange fig wedges on top and bake until light golden (30 minutes). Brush top of pudding with maple syrup and bake until deep golden and centre springs back when lightly pressed (15-20 minutes).

**3** Meanwhile, for butterscotch sauce, scatter sugar evenly over base of a large frying pan; cook over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally, until sugar dissolves, then swirl pan until foaming and a dark caramel forms (8-10 minutes). Remove from heat, carefully add 100ml water (hot caramel will spit), return to medium heat and stir in cream, butter, tahini, sesame seeds and 1 tsp sea salt flakes until combined. Keep warm. Butterscotch can be stored in the refrigerator for up to 1 week; warm before serving.

**4** Serve warm pudding drizzled with butterscotch sauce and ice-cream on the side.

# Flourless fig leaf and pistachio cake with rose and raspberries

SERVES 16 // PREP 30 MINS // COOK 45 MINS (PLUS STANDING, COOLING, SETTING)

**Fig leaf adds floral, citrus and vanilla notes to the Middle Eastern flavours of pistachio, lime and cardamom.**

| | |
|---|---|
| **250** | **gm pure icing sugar, sifted** |
| **1½** | **tbsp lime juice** |
| **2** | **tsp rosewater** |
| **6** | **finger limes, pearls removed** |
| | **Raspberries, slivered pistachios, rose petals and baby mint, to serve** |
| | **CAKE** |
| | **Softened unsalted butter, for greasing** |
| | **Rice flour, for dusting** |
| **200** | **gm caster sugar** |
| **1** | **small edible fig leaf, fibrous stalk removed** |
| **220** | **gm roasted pistachios** |
| **100** | **gm desiccated coconut** |
| **1** | **tsp ground cardamom** |
| **200** | **gm unsalted butter, melted and cooled** |
| **5** | **eggs, lightly beaten** |
| | **Finely grated zest of 2 limes** |

**1** For cake, preheat oven to 160°C fan-forced. Grease a 30cm, 1.25-litre ring tin with butter, then dust with rice flour to coat. Combine sugar and fig leaf in a large food processor and process until bright green and finely chopped. Add pistachios and process until finely ground. Add remaining dry ingredients and pulse to combine, then transfer to a large bowl. Whisk butter, eggs and lime zest in a jug, then add to dry ingredients and stir until combined. Pour batter into tin and bake until golden and a skewer inserted withdraws clean (40-45 minutes). Stand cake for 10 minutes, then invert onto a wire rack to cool.

**2** Whisk icing sugar, lime juice and rosewater in a bowl until smooth. Set aside to thicken (10 minutes). Drizzle icing over cake, top with raspberries, pistachios, rose petals, finger lime pearls and mint; stand to set (15 minutes). Cut slices to serve. ●

**Pistachio cake** Charger plate in Ash from Mud Australia. All other props stylist's own.

# Art of abundance

In her new release *Lugma*, Ottolenghi alumnae and cookbook author **NOOR MURAD** shares dishes and stories from the Middle East.

“*LUGMA* IS AN ODE TO THE FOOD of my childhood, a mash-up of food from Bahrain and the surrounding countries, with a slightly Westernised take, thanks to my English roots,” says Noor Murad in *Lugma*. Murad is a Bahraini-British chef and author who has worked extensively for Yotam Ottolenghi as a chef and recipe developer. “Lugma is Arabic for a bite, or a mouthful,” she says. “Which seems fitting really, as I feel like my whole career has been centred around taking bites of things and analysing them: more acid here, a pinch of salt there, missing sweetness overall.” The cookbook has been a lifetime in the making for Murad, with Middle Eastern plates meeting Western dishes and finding their place together on the same table.

# Pan-fried tomatoes with za’atar, pine nuts and haloumi

SERVES 4-6 AS A SIDE

**“This is an impressive side dish to serve as part of a summer spread,” says Murad. “Make sure your tomatoes are not overly ripe here, you want them to keep their shape when pan-frying.”**

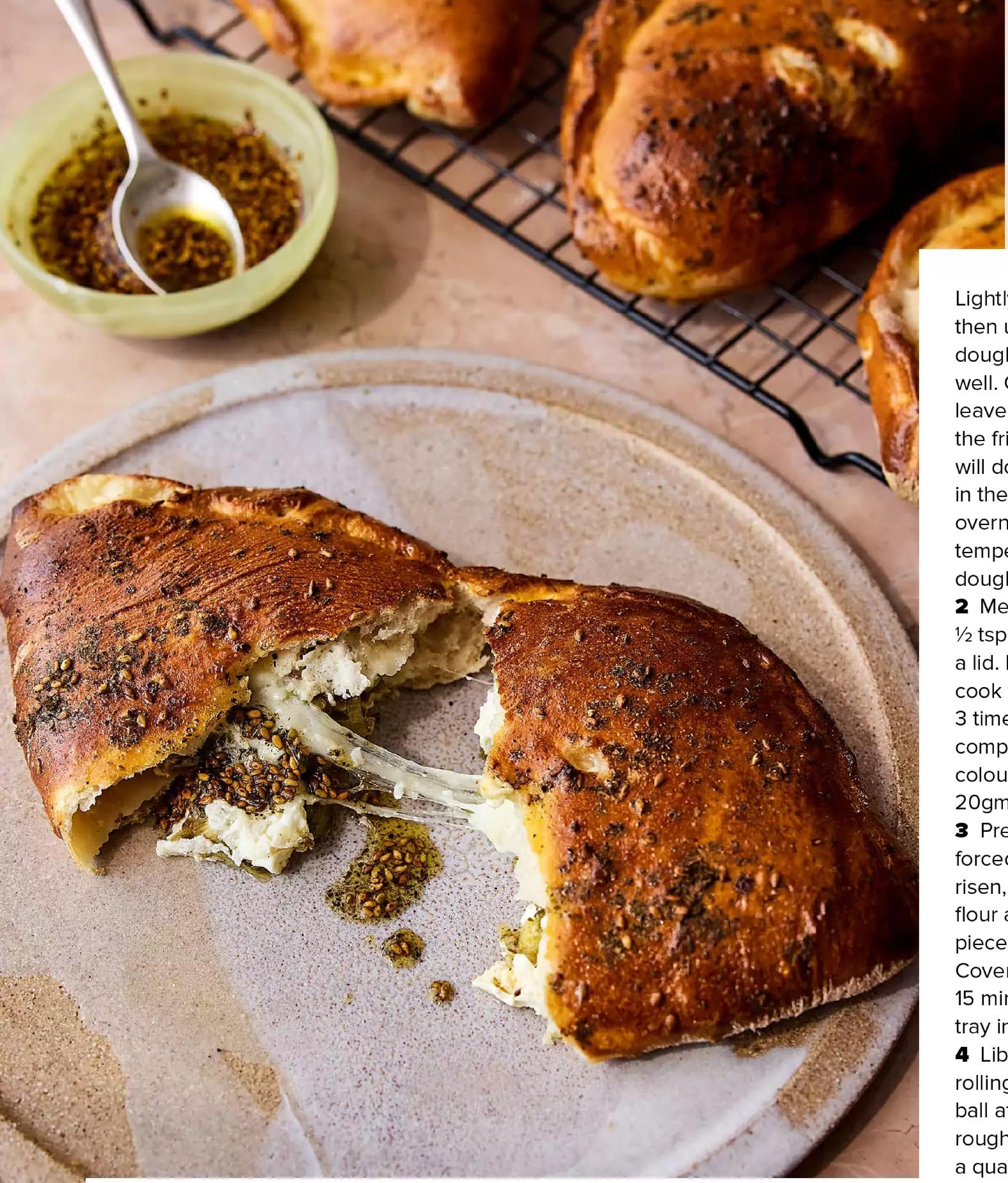
| | |
|---|---|
| **4** | **tbsp olive oil** |
| **4** | **tsp maple syrup** |
| **6** | **medium-large vine tomatoes, cored and halved widthways** |
| **35** | **gm pine nuts** |
| **4** | **garlic cloves, finely chopped** |
| **2** | **tbsp oregano leaves, picked** |
| **2½** | **tsp za’atar** |
| **60** | **gm haloumi, finely grated (shredded)** |
| **50** | **gm ricotta** |
| | **Fine sea salt and freshly ground black pepper** |

**1** Add 1 tbsp oil and 2 tsp maple syrup to a large, non-stick frying pan over a medium heat. Sprinkle the cut side of half the tomatoes with ¼ tsp salt and a generous grind of black pepper. Once hot, arrange the seasoned tomatoes, cut-side down in a single layer, in the pan. Sprinkle the tops with a pinch of salt and pepper and fry for 10-12 minutes, until they’re nice and caramelised at the bottom. Turn up the temperature to medium-high if needed. Use a spatula to gently flip them over and fry the other side for 2 minutes more. You want the tomatoes to be softened and cooked but still retain their shape – some tomatoes might soften faster than others. Gently remove them as they’re ready and arrange them, cut-side up, on a serving plate. Pour any remaining oil or juices left in the pan over the tomatoes, then rinse and dry the pan. Replace over a medium to medium-high heat with another tablespoon of oil and the remaining 2 tsp maple syrup. Sprinkle the remaining half of the tomatoes with ¼ tsp salt and a generous grind of pepper and, once hot, continue frying in the same way.

**2** Once all the tomatoes are fried, rinse and dry the pan again, then place over a medium heat with the remaining 2 tbsp oil, the pine nuts and a tiny pinch of salt. Cook for 1½-2 minutes, stirring constantly, or until the pine nuts just begin to colour. Add the garlic and oregano and cook for a minute more, stirring all the while, until the pine nuts are golden and the garlic fragrant and lightly coloured. Off the heat, stir in 2 tsps za’atar and pour into a bowl to stop the cooking.

**3** Combine the haloumi and ricotta in a small bowl and spoon this all over the tomatoes. Spoon over the pine nut and oil mixture and sprinkle with the last ½ tsp za’atar. ➤

PHOTOGRAPHY MATT RUSSELL & MATT WARDLE.



# Cheesy leek and za'atar fatayer

MAKES 4 // PROVING TIME 2 HRS 20 MINS OR OVERNIGHT

**"These fatayer are similar to Arabic pizza, except that they're a folded-over flatbread and stuffed, like calzone," says Murad. "Make a quick za'atar oil by mixing together a spoonful of za'atar with a generous amount of good-quality extra-virgin olive oil and use this to dip your fatayer into."**

| | |
|---|---|
| | **FATAYER** |
| **190** | **ml lukewarm water** |
| **¾** | **tsp fast-action dried yeast** |
| **2** | **tsp olive oil, plus extra for greasing** |
| **2** | **tsp sugar** |
| **300** | **gm plain (all-purpose) flour, plus extra for shaping** |
| **½** | **tsp salt** |
| | **FILLING** |
| **3** | **leeks, white and light green parts only, halved, cleaned and thinly sliced (320gm)** |
| **1** | **tbsp olive oil** |
| **20** | **gm za'atar, plus 4 tsp for baking** |
| **150** | **gm labneh, bought or homemade** |
| **100** | **gm feta, coarsely crumbled** |
| **125** | **gm buffalo mozzarella, patted dry and thinly sliced** |
| **1** | **egg yolk, beaten with 1 tsp water** |
| | **Fine sea salt** |

**1** Add all the fatayer ingredients to a stand mixer, fitted with the dough hook, and mix on medium-low speed for about 1½ minutes or until the dough comes together into a shaggy ball. Increase the speed to medium-high and continue to mix for 6 minutes or until the dough comes away from the sides of the bowl and is nice and soft.

Lightly grease a bowl with some oil, then use well-greased hands to tip the dough into it. Lightly grease the top as well. Cover with a clean tea towel and leave in a warm place (like on top of the fridge) to prove for 2 hours; it will double in size. Alternatively, put in the refrigerator and leave to prove overnight (and allow to come to room temperature before working the dough again).

**2** Meanwhile, put the leeks, oil and ½ tsp salt in a saucepan and top with a lid. Place over a medium heat and cook for about 15 minutes, stirring 2 to 3 times throughout, until the leeks are completely softened but not at all coloured. Off the heat, stir in the 20gm za'atar and set aside to cool.

**3** Preheat the oven to 230°C fan-forced or 250°C. Once the dough has risen, dust a clean work surface with flour and divide the dough into 4 equal pieces, shaping each into a ball. Cover with a tea towel and let rest for 15 minutes. Meanwhile, place a large tray in the oven to heat up.

**4** Liberally dust your work surface and rolling pin with flour and, working one ball at a time, roll out the dough into roughly a 20cm disc. Spread with a quarter of the labneh, leaving a 1.5cm border. Top one half of the labneh with a quarter of the feta, a quarter of the leek mixture and a quarter of the mozzarella. Fold over the other half so the filling is now encased. Pinch together the ends and either roll them up slightly or crimp with your fingers by pulling small sections of dough and then folding them up (this isn't necessary, but looks nice). Repeat to make a second (you'll bake two at a time).

**5** When ready to bake, dust the hot tray with flour. Very carefully use a spatula to lift the two doughs onto the tray, spacing them nicely apart. Brush the beaten egg yolk all over and then sprinkle each with 1 tsp za'atar. Finally, use kitchen scissors or a small sharp knife to make two small snips into the top, to let some steam escape when baking. Bake for 10-12 minutes, rotating the pan or tray halfway, until deeply golden. Carefully transfer to a wire rack to cool while you assemble and bake the remaining two.

# Sautéed greens with yoghurt, fried onions and turmeric oil

SERVES 4 AS A SIDE DISH

**"The lovely Claudine Boulstridge, who cross-tested most of the recipes in this book, told me that I really needed to sell this dish more. She said 'greens' sounds too boring and healthy," says Murad. "They're definitely not boring, even if they are quite healthy, so I stand by Claudine in saying that this is a very tasty way to get your greens in."**

| | |
|---|---|
| **1** | **tbsp apple cider vinegar** |
| **25** | **gm golden raisins** |
| **135** | **ml olive oil** |
| **3** | **onions, 2 halved and cut into 0.5cm slices (360gm), 1 finely chopped (180gm)** |
| **¾** | **tsp ground turmeric** |
| **¾** | **tsp dried mint** |
| **200** | **gm Swiss chard leaves only, coarsely shredded (save stems for another use)** |
| **100** | **gm cavolo nero leaves only, coarsely shredded** |
| **200** | **gm baby spinach** |
| **3** | **garlic cloves, crushed** |
| **15** | **gm fresh mint leaves, coarsely chopped** |
| **300** | **gm Greek yoghurt, at room temperature** |
| **1** | **tbsp lemon juice** |
| | **Fine sea salt and freshly ground black pepper** |

**1** Add the vinegar and golden raisins to a small bowl and set aside while you continue with the rest.

**2** Add 6 tbsp oil to a frying pan (skillet) and place over a medium-high heat. Once hot, add the sliced onions and turmeric and fry, stirring often to prevent them burning, for about 12-15 minutes, or until deeply browned and starting to crisp up. Use a slotted spoon to transfer the onions to a plate lined with paper towels, leaving the oil in the pan. Set the onions aside to cool and crisp up further. Return the pan to a medium-high heat, add the dried mint and cook for just 20-30 seconds, or until fragrant. Immediately pour the oil into a small heatproof bowl and set aside.

**3** Meanwhile, heat the remaining 3 tbsp olive oil in a large sauté pan over a medium-high heat. Add the finely chopped onion and cook, stirring occasionally, for about 5 minutes, or until softened and lightly coloured. Add big handfuls of the chard, kale and spinach, stirring to wilt a little before adding more. Once all the greens are in the pan, add the garlic, ¾ tsp salt and a good grind of pepper, turn up the heat to high and cook for about 3-4 minutes, or until the greens are soft and no liquid remains in the pan. Take off the heat and stir in the fresh mint.

**4** In a bowl, mix together the yoghurt, lemon juice and ¼ tsp salt. Spread half of this on a large platter and top with half the greens, half the fried onions and half the golden raisins. Repeat with the remaining yoghurt, greens, onions and golden raisins. Drizzle over the turmeric oil and serve warm, or at room temperature if you prefer. ➤

# Arabic baked beans

SERVES 4

**"Quick dinners as a kid were often baked beans on toast, smothered in cheddar and stuck under a hot grill until all melty," says Murad. "It's not uncommon to find some kind of white bean at a Middle Eastern breakfast table, stewed in a tomato-based sauce. This recipe is a happy amalgamation of the two. You can scoop it right out of the pan with warm pitas, or spoon it onto sourdough or baked potatoes and serve it for breakfast, lunch or even dinner."**

| | |
|---|---|
| **3** | **plum tomatoes (about 350gm)** |
| **3** | **tbsp olive oil** |
| **1** | **onion, very finely chopped (180gm)** |
| **4** | **garlic cloves, finely grated** |
| **25** | **gm fresh ginger, peeled and finely grated** |
| **1** | **green chilli, finely chopped, seeds and all** |
| **2** | **tsp cumin seeds, finely crushed using a pestle and mortar** |
| **2** | **tsp coriander seeds, finely crushed using a pestle and mortar** |
| **1** | **tsp paprika** |
| **3** | **tbsp tomato paste (purée)** |
| **1** | **tsp sugar** |
| **2** | **400gm cans cannellini beans, rinsed and drained (about 480gm)** |
| **25** | **gm fresh coriander, finely chopped** |
| **120** | **gm labneh, bought or homemade, or cream cheese** |
| **120** | **gm mature cheddar, coarsely grated (shredded)** |
| | **Fine sea salt and freshly ground black pepper** |
| | **TOPPING** |
| **3** | **tbsp olive oil** |
| **3** | **garlic cloves, finely chopped** |
| **15** | **gm fresh ginger, peeled and finely chopped** |
| **3** | **spring onions, green parts only, finely chopped** |

**1** Use a small knife to cut around and remove the tomato stems then make a small X incision on the opposite end. Place in a heatproof bowl and pour over enough boiling water to cover by a couple of centimetres. Leave for about 2-3 minutes, or just until the tomato skins visibly start to peel off. Drain, then carefully remove and discard the skins. Cut the tomatoes into quarters and set aside.

**2** Preheat the oven to its highest setting, placing a rack on the top shelf.

**3** In a large, cast-iron pan (or ovenproof sauté pan), heat the oil over a medium-high heat. Add the onion and ⅛ tsp salt, turn down the heat to medium and cook for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally, until softened and very lightly coloured. Add the garlic, ginger, green chilli, spices and tomato paste and cook for 2-3 minutes more, stirring often, until deeply red. Pour in 450ml water, then stir in the sugar, beans, tomatoes, ¾ tsp salt and a good grind of pepper. Bring to a simmer and cook for about 12 minutes, stirring occasionally, or until the tomatoes are only just starting to lose their shape and the sauce has thickened just slightly. Stir in the coriander and remove from the heat. Top evenly with spoonfuls of the labneh (or cream cheese) then sprinkle with the cheddar. Bake for 12-15 minutes, or until browned and bubbling.

**4** Meanwhile, make the topping. Add all the ingredients plus a tiny pinch of salt to a small frying pan and place over a medium-low heat. Cook gently for about 12-15 minutes, stirring occasionally, or until softened and fragrant. You don't want it to colour at all, so if it starts to bubble too much, turn down the heat to low. Transfer to a bowl.

**5** When the beans are ready, spoon the topping all over the beans and serve warm.

# Sweet date and sour tamarind sea bass

SERVES 2

**"I adore sweet and sour flavours together but especially the combination of dates and tamarind, which is a match made in (food) heaven. This is a wonderfully easy dish to make, with super-punchy flavours," says Murad.**

| | |
|---|---|
| **60** | **gm tamarind pulp (from a block)** |
| **220** | **ml boiling water** |
| **60** | **gm pitted medjool dates (about 3)** |
| **1** | **small red onion, very finely chopped (90gm)** |
| **1** | **small green (bell) pepper, stem and seeds removed, finely chopped into 0.5cm cubes (120gm)** |
| **2** | **garlic cloves, finely chopped** |
| **1-2** | **green chillies, finely chopped, seeds and all (depending on your heat preference)** |
| **30** | **gm coriander leaves and soft stems, finely chopped** |
| **3½** | **tbsp olive oil, plus extra to serve** |
| **4** | **unskinned sea bass fillets** |
| **1** | **tsp mild curry powder** |
| **½** | **lime** |
| | **Fine sea salt and freshly ground black pepper** |

**1** Preheat the oven to 210°C fan-forced or 230°C. Line a shallow baking dish (30cm x 20cm) with baking paper.

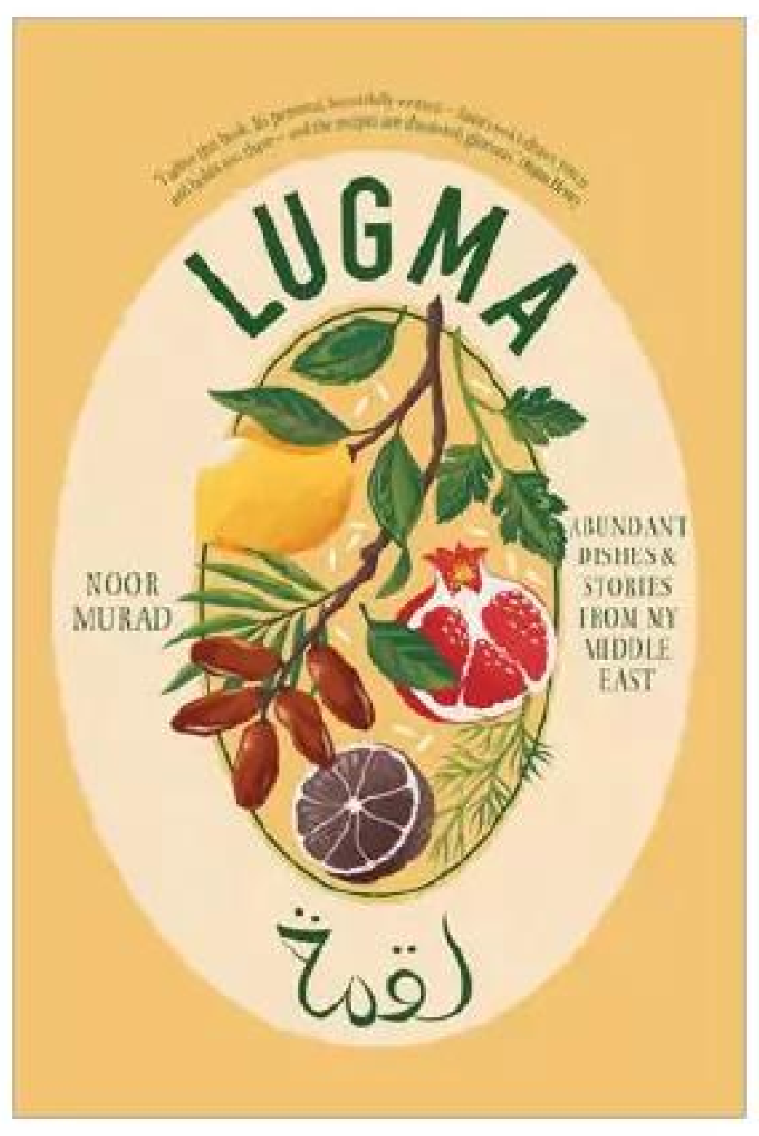
**2** Place the tamarind in a small heatproof bowl and pour over 120ml boiling water. In a separate small heatproof bowl, add the dates and the remaining 100ml boiling water. Set both aside for 15 minutes.

**3** Meanwhile, in a bowl mix together the onion, green pepper, garlic, chilli, coriander, 2 tbsp oil, ¼ tsp salt and a good grind of pepper.

**4** When ready, remove the dates from their water and place them in the bowl of a small food processor along with 2 tbsp of their water, then blitz until the dates are finely chopped and you have a paste (you can also do this with a hand-held blender).

**5** Use your fingers to loosen the tamarind pulp from the seeds, then pour this through a fine-mesh sieve set over a separate bowl. Push down on the solids to extract as much of the tamarind liquid as possible, scraping at the bottom of the sieve as well. Discard the solids and then mix in the date paste.

**6** Pat dry the sea bass fillets and place them, skin-side down, in the lined baking dish (don't worry if they're slightly overlapping). Sprinkle the flesh all over with the curry powder, ¾ tsp salt and a good grind of pepper. Spoon over all the tamarind and date mixture, using your fingers to coat the flesh, then pour over the remaining 1½ tbsp oil. Lastly, spoon the onion and pepper mixture down the fillets. Bake for 17-20 minutes, or until cooked through and lightly coloured. Transfer to a plate, squeeze over the lime and drizzle with some extra olive oil. ●



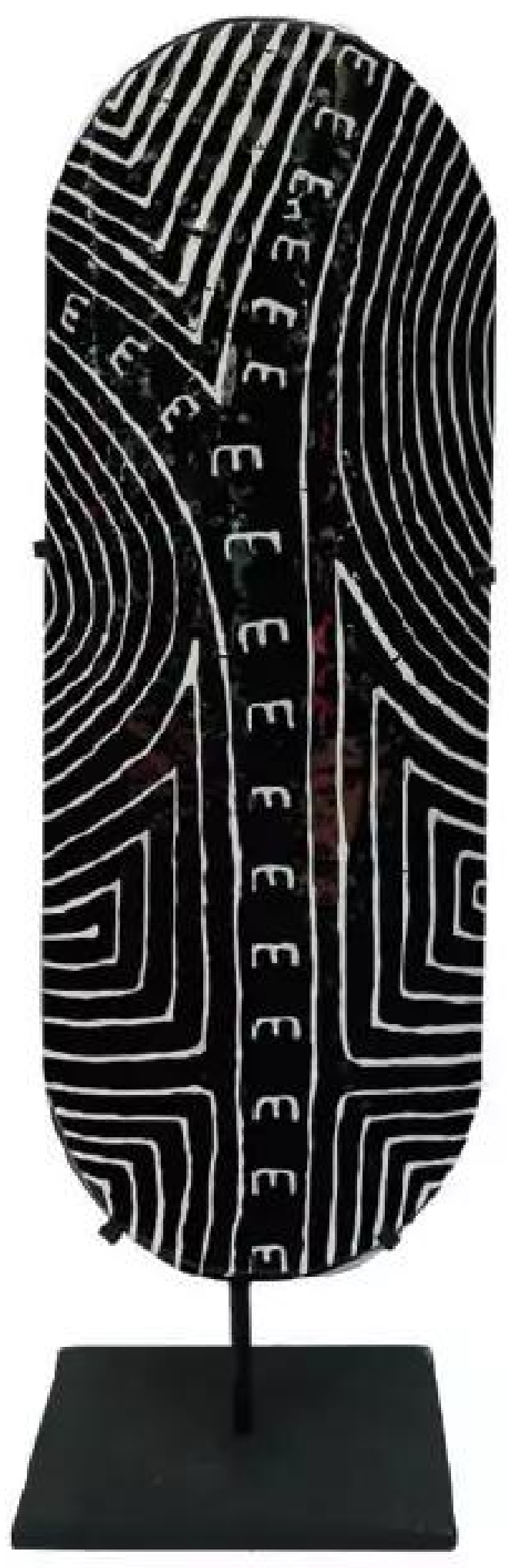
This extract from *Lugma* by Noor Murad (Hardie Grant, $55) has been reproduced with minor *GT* style edits.

[redacted]

# Gourmet shopping

They're the flavours of the month, so put these items at the top of your wish list.

①



**Art Mob** is proud to stock Aboriginal art glass created by Sam Juparulla Wickman. His artworks are culturally significant and show his connection to country. RRP $2400, *artmob.com.au*

②

**Junction** is a restaurant located on the stunning Murray River in Echuca Moama, Victoria. It's a gathering place that showcases everything the region has to offer in a single sophisticated setting. RRP $30–$100, *junctionmoama.com.au*

③

EST 1901
LURPAK
BUTTER
SLIGHTLY SALTED
250g℮

With **Lurpak® Slightly Salted Butter** you're always ready to cook, bake and fry up wonders. With its delicate taste, it enhances the flavour of whatever food you add it to, from a hearty pasta dish, to your showstopper fruit pie, to rustic crushed potatoes. For people who love good food, Lurpak® makes it even better.

④

**Oceania Cruises®** has unveiled its 2025 Specialty Cruises, offering enriching onboard programming led by renowned hosts, in fascinating destinations such as Turkey and Alaska. World-class cuisine and cultural immersion opportunities await you onboard. RRP $6080, *oceaniacruises.com/specialty-cruises*

⑤

Dolce&Gabbana
SMEG

**Smeg's** latest collaboration with Dolce&Gabbana, Blu Mediterraneo, delivers iconic small appliances decorated in colours inspired by the Sicilian coast – lively blues and whites in tribute to the sea and sky. Available in a range of Smeg's iconic '50s-style appliances, all made in Italy. RRP $999, *smeg.com/au/products*

⑥

THE GOVERNOR
PREMIUM
THE GOVERNOR
PREMIUM

**The Governor Olive Oil** Made in the lush landscapes of Corfu, this premium extra virgin olive oil is crafted from handpicked early-harvest olives, rich in antioxidants, and cold-pressed to retain its purity. Its robust flavour with a subtle fruitiness elevates dishes while promoting health. Perfect for drizzling, cooking or dipping. From $92, *thegreekprovidore.com.au*

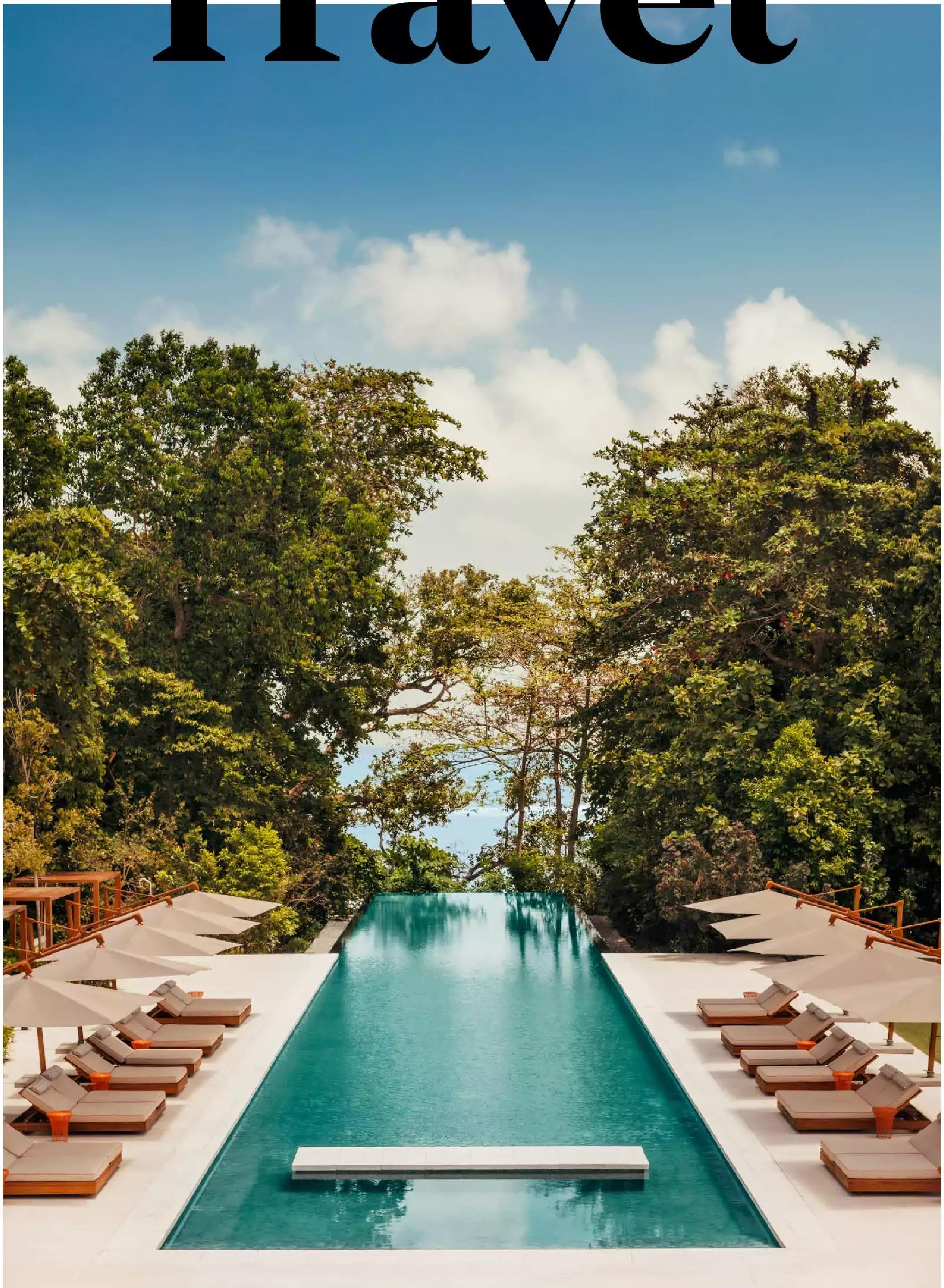
**Anna Hart's Art of Travel**
PAGE 116

**Exploring the Scenic Rim**
PAGE 118

**GT at Sea Silver Ray**
PAGE 136

**Destination Wellness**
PAGE 138

# Travel



The Infinity Pool at One&Only Desaru Coast, Malaysia.

# The art of... lingering longer

When you're counting nights in a hotel room, three is the magic number, says **ANNA HART**.

ILLUSTRATION ADOBE STOCK IMAGES.

ONE OF THE MOST FABULOUS THINGS ABOUT getting older is that we are allowed to have "rules" about how we travel. You know, those things we didn't have, as teenage or twenty-something travellers. You could also call them "standards". By this point in my life, I've essentially written an entire constitution regarding How I Holiday, with appendices and amendments that will continue to be tweaked, challenged and furiously rewritten – by me – until I die. (I hope to die on a memory-foam sun-lounger adjusted to the perfect gradient, holding a Dirty Martini mixed just the way I like it, listening to a Tolstoy audiobook narrated by Stephen Fry in his prime, or, potentially, a nicely aged Ben Whishaw, in a yet-to-be-determined destination that I return to throughout my eighties; probably Italy, potentially Dominica.) But I am getting ahead of myself! At least I hope so. Anyway, I want to talk about one of my very first "travel rules", or constitutional rights: the three-night minimum stay.

I truly was an early adopter of this rule. I was in my late twenties, working at magazines in London. Many of my friends – particularly friends from Australia and New Zealand – would gleefully EasyJet off to Amsterdam, Milan, Paris or Berlin for the weekend, thinking nothing of a one- or two-night stay. (When I moved to New Zealand and felt, for the first time, how far away Europe was, and therefore how tantalisingly close such cities must have seemed from London, I belatedly understood.) Even at the time, I admired their gusto, I really did. But I soon realised that by taking an extra day off, I gained vastly increasing returns, a more favourable trip:transport ratio, much more bang-for-buck. It meant travelling less often, and frittering away much of my annual leave on Fridays and Mondays, but the economies of scale made it all worth it.

Naturally, if the choice is between a two-night stay and not making the trip at all, I'll make the trip. But after a strangely joyless too-short trip to Lisbon, I made "three nights" my default short stay, not two, and thus begat my bespoke traveller's constitution. This decision felt decadent, it felt defiant, and it felt sensible. These three gratifying emotions are rarely united, but they are, in the three-day weekend.

Three is truly a magic number. A three-night stay provides us with two glorious mornings where we wake up in the knowledge that we don't have to travel anywhere. Which, closely followed by Egyptian cotton sheets, is quite the nicest thing to wake up in. One morning of awakening to this delicious feeling simply isn't sufficient to feel remotely like a holiday. A two-night stay means two out of three days involve transport. Three nights, however, brings in space to breathe.

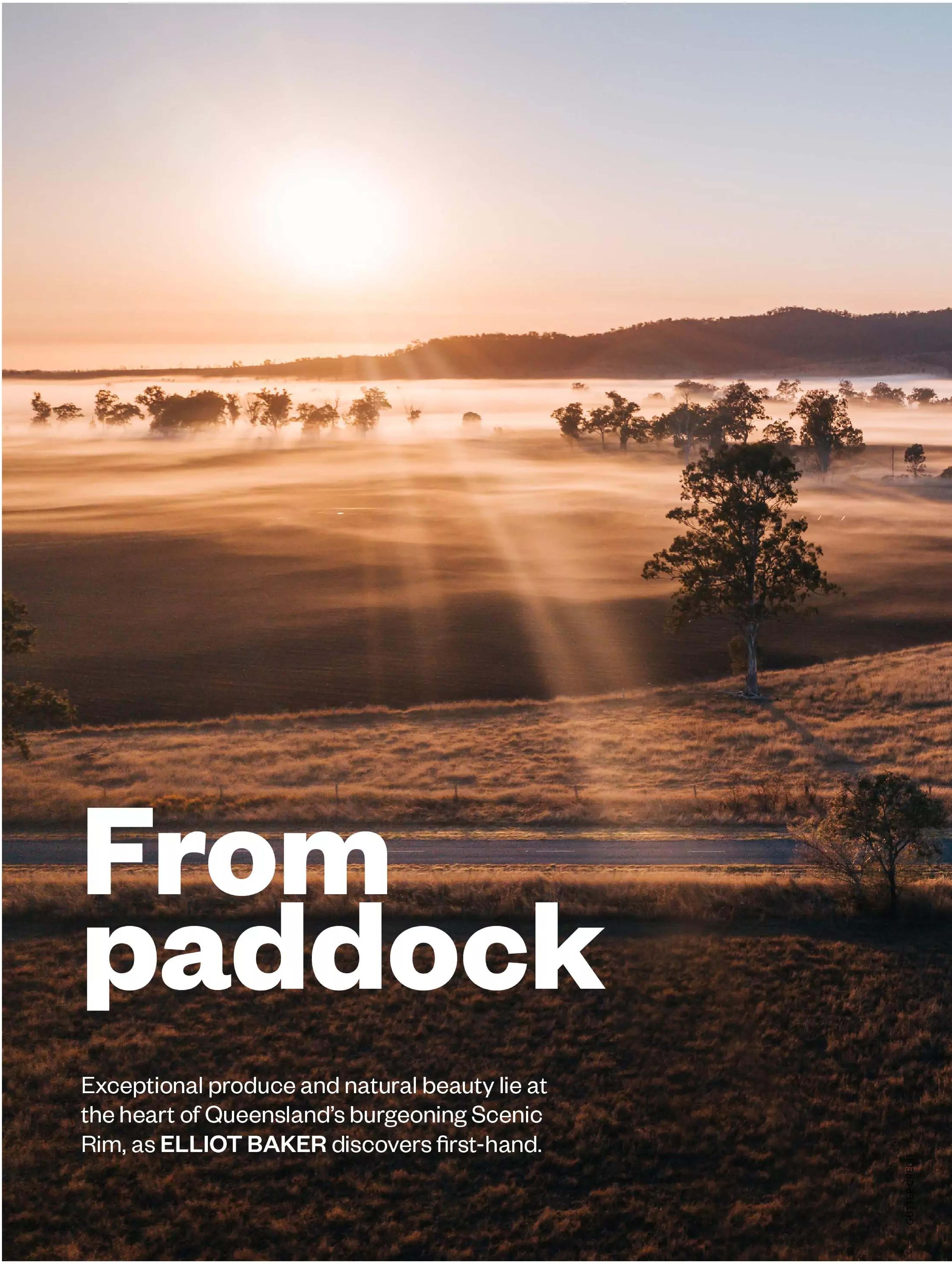
The other disproportionate upgrade of the three-day weekend is the note of spontaneity it brings to proceedings. With a paltry regular weekend, or any two-night stay, we really have to plan an itinerary and book things, if we want it to deliver. There's a panicky twinge of scarcity to a two-night weekend away; we need every hour to count, every mealtime to be a roaring success. This is not the recipe for a relaxed weekend. But with three nights, I feel okay about screwing something up. This means I can roll the dice with a new restaurant, or just ask someone where we should go for a hike, or stumble upon some eccentric local event I've never heard of. Three nights allows more magic in.

> I feel guilty about all the hotel rooms I slept with for one night, barely remembering their room number.

I have more prosaic reasons for my strong preference for the three-night stay. It means I bother to unpack, and hang everything up in the wardrobe. This would feel daft for just one night; possibly even two. But if this is no one-night stand, and I am moving into this room for three days, then I am in a relationship with this room. I'm willing to invest 20 emotionally intense minutes folding my things and wrestling with an antique chest of drawers, carefully arranging my bottles around the bathroom sink and putting books on shelves, just so. Seeing my stuff spread out in these new surroundings, spoiling the décor, is what it takes for me to feel at home somewhere, and the whole point of staying in a nice hotel is to feel at home there. When I think back to my younger days, I feel guilty about all the hotel rooms I slept with for one night, barely remembering their room number. They must have felt so used. I'm different now; I'm a three-day-weekend woman. Three nights means making the room our own.

But the most wonderful thing about the three-day weekend is that, by design, it underpromises and overdelivers. After all, this is just a weekend away. But for all the above reasons, it feels like so much more. A three-day weekend is a luxury weekend, a top-notch weekend, a first-class weekend, a weekend supreme. The main thing we want from a weekend is more of it, and every so often, the calendar delivers. ●

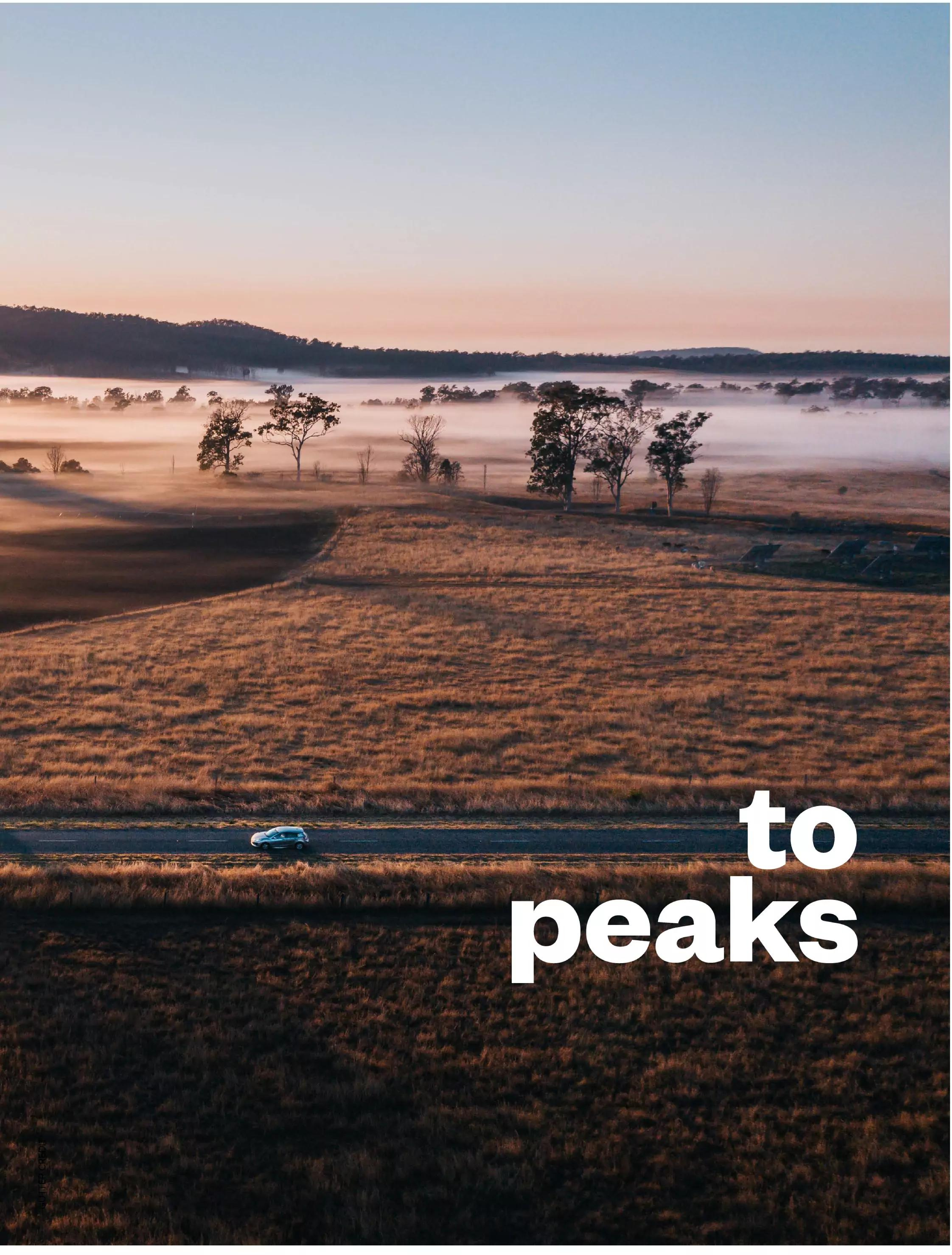
**Anna is a travel and lifestyle journalist, and author of the travel memoir *Departures*. @annadothart**



# From paddock

Exceptional produce and natural beauty lie at the heart of Queensland's burgeoning Scenic Rim, as **ELLIOT BAKER** discovers first-hand.

GUTTER CREDIT



# to peaks

GUTTER CREDIT

When did the Scenic Rim get so good? I ponder the question while gazing out from The Tamborine Boutique Hotel, taking in sweeping mountain views. Ahead, the suburb of Eagle Heights sits atop the range, rooftops peeking through thick foliage. To my right, the Gold Coast stretches into the distance, the ocean just visible on this clear, bluebird day.

After a few days of exploring the region, I'm struck by the sheer volume of activity here. It's hard to believe this is only an hour's drive away from Brisbane and the Gold Coast considering the dramatic change in scenery and cooler temperatures.

Opened in December, The Tamborine Boutique Hotel has added a new level of sophistication to the region. The reimagined 1980s hacienda-style motel features 23 rooms, each with a balcony or terrace overlooking the mountains. The buzz is palpable, and if the Hollywood celebrities staying alongside me are anything to go by, the Scenic Rim is now well and truly on people's radar.

And for good reason. From the lush paddocks of Boonah to the rolling hills of Beechmont and the World Heritage-listed national parks surrounding Tamborine Mountain, this is a region of diversity. There's lots of ground to cover; more than 4200 square kilometres of it, in fact.

The Tamborine Boutique Hotel makes an ideal base for a Scenic Rim getaway, particularly for those drawn to Tamborine Mountain's thriving food and drink scene. While it's tempting to lounge by the

PHOTOGRAPHY BRIAN CULY.

**Clockwise from above: Champagne hour at The Tamborine Boutique Hotel; a balcony with a view; inside one of its suites; poolside. Opposite: The Hub at The Tamborine.**

While it's tempting to lounge by the heated mineral pool or relax on the lawn taking in the view, the area brims with walking trails, wineries and breweries to explore.

heated mineral pool or relax on the lawn taking in the view, the area brims with walking trails, wineries, breweries and distilleries to explore.

An essential stop is North Stores, an eco-friendly food, art and nature precinct in the heart of town. Opened in 2021 by long-time best friends Brenda Fawdon and Sonja Drexler (the duo behind Brisbane's pioneering Mondo Organics), the precinct houses several small businesses, including a ceramics studio and florist. "When the block came up for sale, it was a bit unusual because of its triangle shape," says Fawdon. "People were scared of that, but we weren't."

It's the sort of fearless attitude Fawdon and Drexler are known for. Their café, Picnic Real Food Bar, continues the ethos they championed at Mondo, with a menu highlighting fresh, seasonal ➤

and locally sourced ingredients. A Bombay fish burger comes with house-made tartare, pickled red onion and baby gem lettuce, while zucchini and green pea fritters are topped with herbed labneh, pickled daikon and cucumber salad. It's simple, nourishing food done exceptionally well.

Another North Stores tenant, Loborn, is a small-batch distillery launched last year by Tom Drewett. While living in London, Drewett became fascinated with finding the perfect Negroni, eventually leading him to craft his own spirits back home. Despite working as a mechatronic engineer during the week, he finds time to produce two amari (Amaro No.01 and Amaro No.02), a London dry-style gin (Loborn Original Gin) and a red vermouth – all using botanicals sourced from the mountain.

At Loborn's intimate 14-seat tasting room, visitors can sample Drewett's spirits individually and even mix up a cocktail themselves. He guides me through making a Sbagliato, a lighter, more spritzy take on the Negroni, made with sparkling wine, Amaro No.02 and red vermouth. It's the perfect refreshment on a warm Queensland afternoon.

A pioneer of the local drink scene, Witches Falls winery has been operating since 2004. Owners Jon and Kim Heslop focus on alternative varieties, mostly sourcing grapes from South Australia's Riverland region and Queensland's Granite Belt. The relaxed cellar door overlooks Pecorino vines, while a space next door is home to their brewery, Boxer Brewing Co. Inside the taproom, I try a range of core beers and seasonal releases brewed by Abby Heslop, Jon and Kim's daughter, who recently returned from the UK having served as head brewer at Wimbledon Brewery.

For years, Mount Tamborine's dinner options were relatively limited, but a recent wave of new restaurants has lifted the game. Among them: Greek restaurant Mana Souvlaki and Saint Marthe Brasserie. At the latter, owners Marcus McKay and Amalia Tambling draw on their experience living in Paris, naming the restaurant after the street they once called home. The menu is full of French classics from house-made charcuterie to duck confit and an excellent steak tartare with potato crisps.

Head an hour south to Beechmont, and the landscape shifts again. Instead of rainforest and steep escarpments, you find gently rolling green hills.

Boxer
BREWING CO.
LAZY ALE

**Clockwise from above: a picnic at Beechmont Estate; Boxer Brewing Co beers; oysters with Champagne mignonette at The Paddock; and a bath in one of Beechmont Estate's Luxury Pavilions. Opposite: Beechmont Estate.**

> Their move to Beechmont was inspired by a desire to get closer to producers ... they source ingredients within a 150-kilometre radius.

Beechmont Estate, set on a 75-acre property neighbouring Lamington National Park, is home to 17 self-contained cabins, three pavilions, the luxurious four-bedroom The Residence, and The Paddock, one of the region's best restaurants.

In the kitchen is husband-and-wife team Chris and Alex Norman, who arrived at The Paddock in late 2023 after stints at Michelin-starred restaurants across Europe, including The Ritz London, and leading kitchens in Brisbane. Their move to Beechmont was inspired by a desire to get closer to the region's producers, and they proudly source most of their ingredients within a 150-kilometre radius – some from their on-site garden. ➤

GIN
AMARO NO.02
AMARO
LOBORN

WITCHES FALLS
PROPHECY
Syrah
PROPHECY
Cabernet Sauvignon
WITCHES FALLS
Provenance
CABERNET SAUVIGNON
SHIRAZ

Clockwise from above: tasting bar Loborn; cows at Beechmont Estate; Witches Falls wines.

"We want the restaurant to be a celebration of the Scenic Rim," says Chris, which is backed up by the list of producers they work with: dairy and meat comes from Tommerup's Dairy Farm in Kerry Valley, fruits and vegetables from Valley Pride near Boonah, and they even source some camel products from Summer Land Camels in the region's north.

Indeed, farms lie at the Scenic Rim's heart. One of the biggest events on the region's calendar, Eat Local Month, celebrates its growers and producers. Every June, the community comes together for a month-long festival, hosting long lunches, farm gate experiences and masterclasses. "The excitement around it seems to get bigger every year," says Alex.

Among the festival's Scenic Rim food ambassadors is Jack Stuart, owner-chef at Blume in Boonah. Since opening in 2021, his restaurant has regularly appeared in *Gourmet Traveller*'s Annual Restaurant Guide, and is well worth the drive, an hour west of Tamborine Mountain.

The region's exceptional produce is essential to many restaurants and supermarkets in South East Queensland, but farming here can be unpredictable. The Normans recount a recent story about a beetroot grower who suffered heavy rain damage. Retailers wouldn't take the beets because the leaves were destroyed. Rather than let the produce go to waste, local chefs found clever ways to use them. "If someone's had a bad crop, everyone bands together," says Alex. "You don't see that in the cities."

It's that deep sense of connection – between farmers, chefs and the land – that makes the Scenic Rim special. A cookbook co-authored by Brenda Fawdon, *Eat Local*, captures this sentiment perfectly.

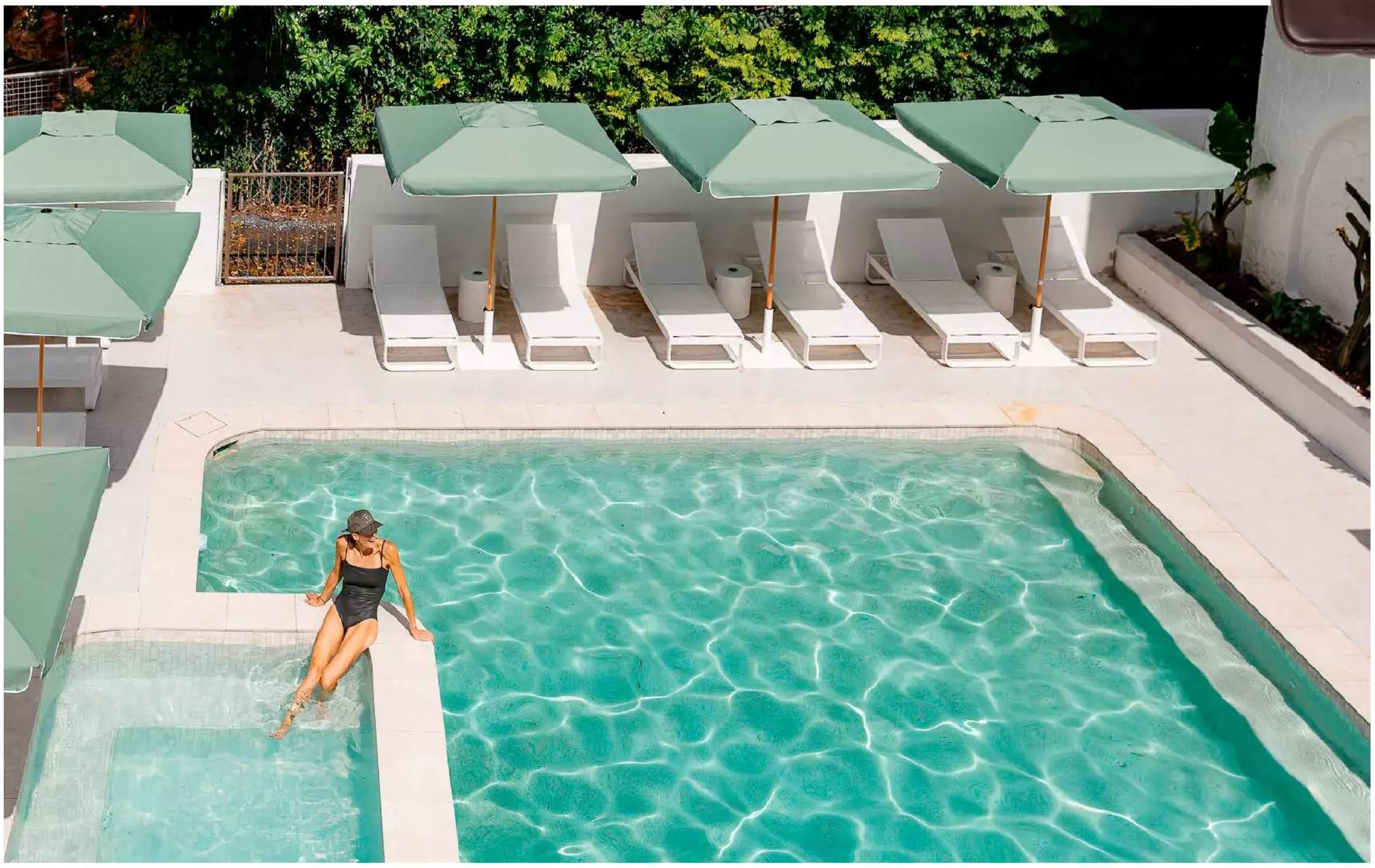
Fawdon is optimistic about the region's future, pointing to a wave of new investment, including new properties like The Tamborine Boutique Hotel and Verandah House Country Estate. "There's lots of energy happening here, and it's attracting people from the city," she says.

So, when did the Scenic Rim get so good? Turns out, it's been quietly building for years, led by dedicated pioneers and passionate newcomers alike. And with more visitors discovering the region, whether for a day trip or a longer stay, the momentum keeps growing.

You get the feeling the best is yet to come. ●

1

2



## ON THE SCENE

### Slip into holiday mode with pared-back luxury and high fashion's current obsession – The Row slipper.

3

4

5

6

EUCALYPTUS 20
7

8

9

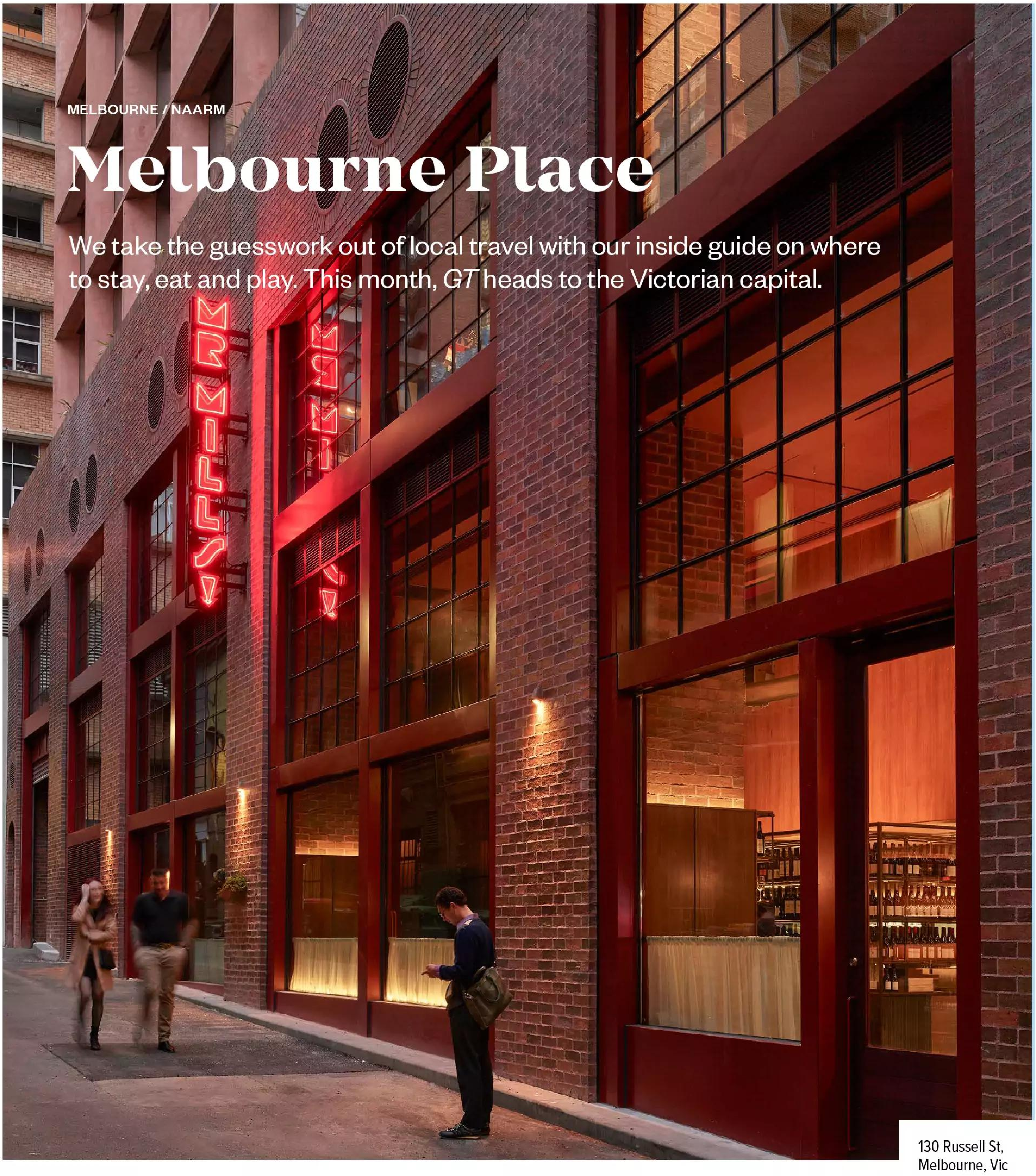
**1** Beau leather micro bag, $1760, Miu Miu. **2** Coach signature bag charm in Silver, $115, The Iconic. **3** Saint Laurent high-rise wide-leg jeans, $1500, MyTheresa. **4** Miu Miu 0MU 07ZS sunglasses in Caramel Transparent, $566, The Iconic. **5** The Row Frances satin-jacquard slippers, $1707, Net-A-Porter. **6** Giant suede bowling bag in Tan Brown, $3675, Saint Laurent. **7** Mina bracelet in 9-karat Yellow Gold, $350, Natasha Schweitzer. **8** Eucalyptus 20 Eau de Parfum, $355 for 50ml, Le Labo. **9** Tank top with Triomphe embroidery in cotton jersey, $1150, Celine. **ABOVE** Poolside at The Tamborine Boutique Hotel.

MERCHANDISING ALEXANDRA HARRIS.

MELBOURNE / NAARM

# Melbourne Place

We take the guesswork out of local travel with our inside guide on where to stay, eat and play. This month, *GT* heads to the Victorian capital.



130 Russell St,
Melbourne, Vic

Priced from $300 for an Everyday Queen room.

**FACILITIES**
**Pool** No
**Spa/Gym** No
**Restaurant** Yes
**Bar** Yes
**Valet parking** No
**Concierge** Yes
**Room service** Yes

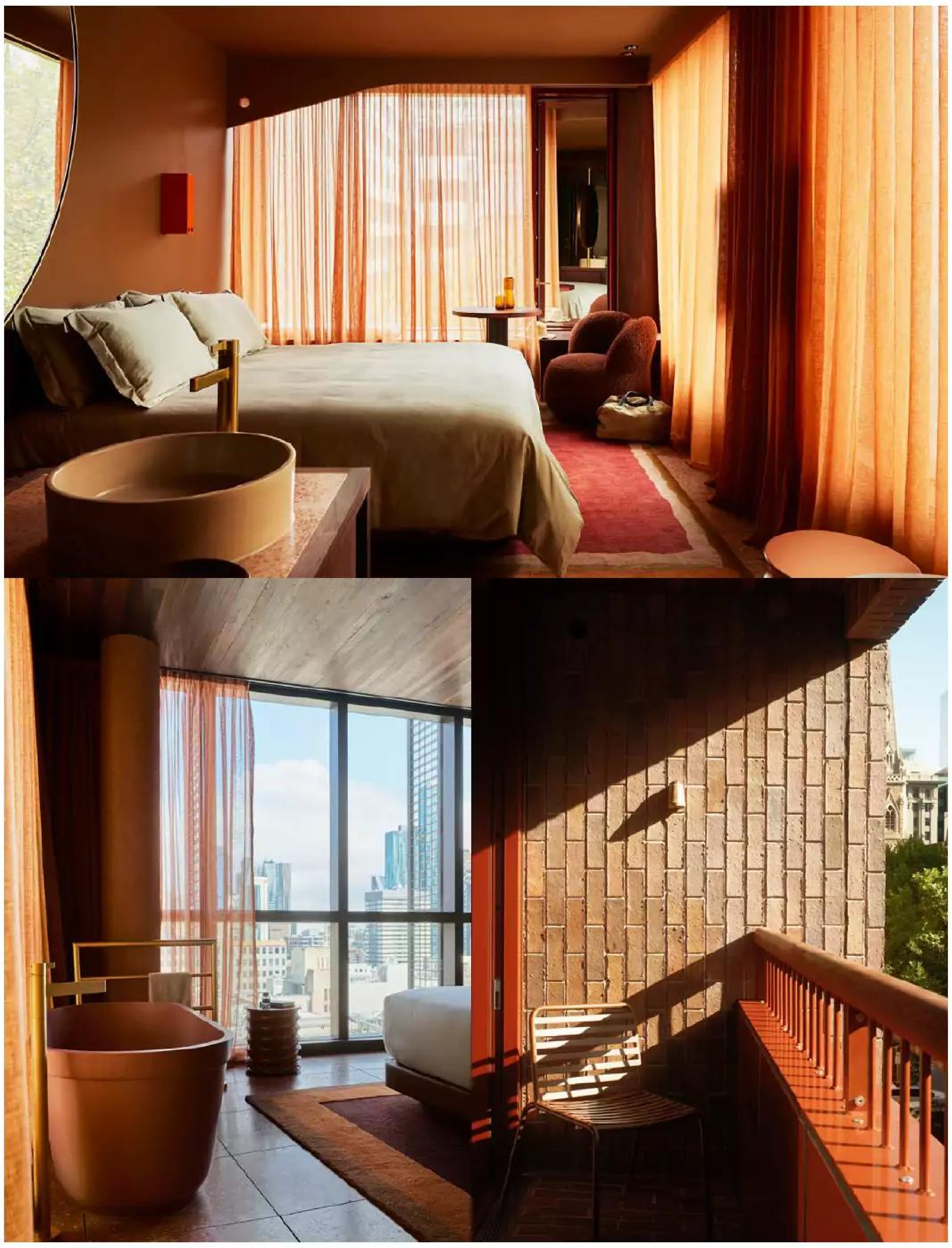
STAY

Out with the old and in with the new has never been a popular sentiment along the Victorian capital's storied streets, but in the case of the handsome new Melbourne Place hotel, credit must be given where due. The 14-storey hotel took over the site of the old Theosophical Society and Bookshop – a blue and cream Art Deco building on bustling Russell Street – in late 2022 before blossoming into the rust-hued splendour it is today ($155 million and several administrative setbacks later). Now, cleverly cloaked in the classic red-brick stylings of the surrounding CBD streets, the luxe high rise is home to 191 perfectly appointed rooms and suites, as well as an impressive flight of food and beverage offerings; from a rooftop restaurant and bar with incredible city views, to an Iberian-inspired diner and basement speakeasy. The hotel's quiet, triumphant opening has proven a masterclass in considered, sensitive design and urban regeneration. *melbourneplace.com.au*

WORDS CHARLOTTE WISHART. PHOTOGRAPHY FELIX MOONEERAM (SUITE), KRISTOFFER PAULSEN (MID AIR) & ANSON SMART (MARMELO) & DEREK SWALWELL (EXTERIOR).

## THE ROOM

How many hotels are furnished with bespoke Jardan chairs in every room? At Melbourne Place, these bouclé marvels are just the beginning of your meticulously designed stay. Thoughtful touches punctuate every element here. From the walk-in rain showers to the complimentary, local producer-dominated minibars, every stylish corner has been carefully considered. All guest rooms and suites are dressed in elemental stylings and differ depending on their orientation. East-facing rooms are in calming shades of green; north-facing rooms are in velvety blue; and those in the west are reminiscent of a golden summer sunset. The thoughtful points of difference don't end here: expect fragrant Leif amenities stocked in lower-level rooms, while upper levels are treated to Aēsop. Throughout, every bedroom is draped in sleek Frette linens, and hooded bathrobes that will become your favourite bedroom companion (partners be warned).



**Clockwise from top left: Marmelo's dining room; the Everyday room interiors and balcony; the rooftop diner Mid Air. Opposite: Melbourne Place exterior.**

## FOOD & DRINK

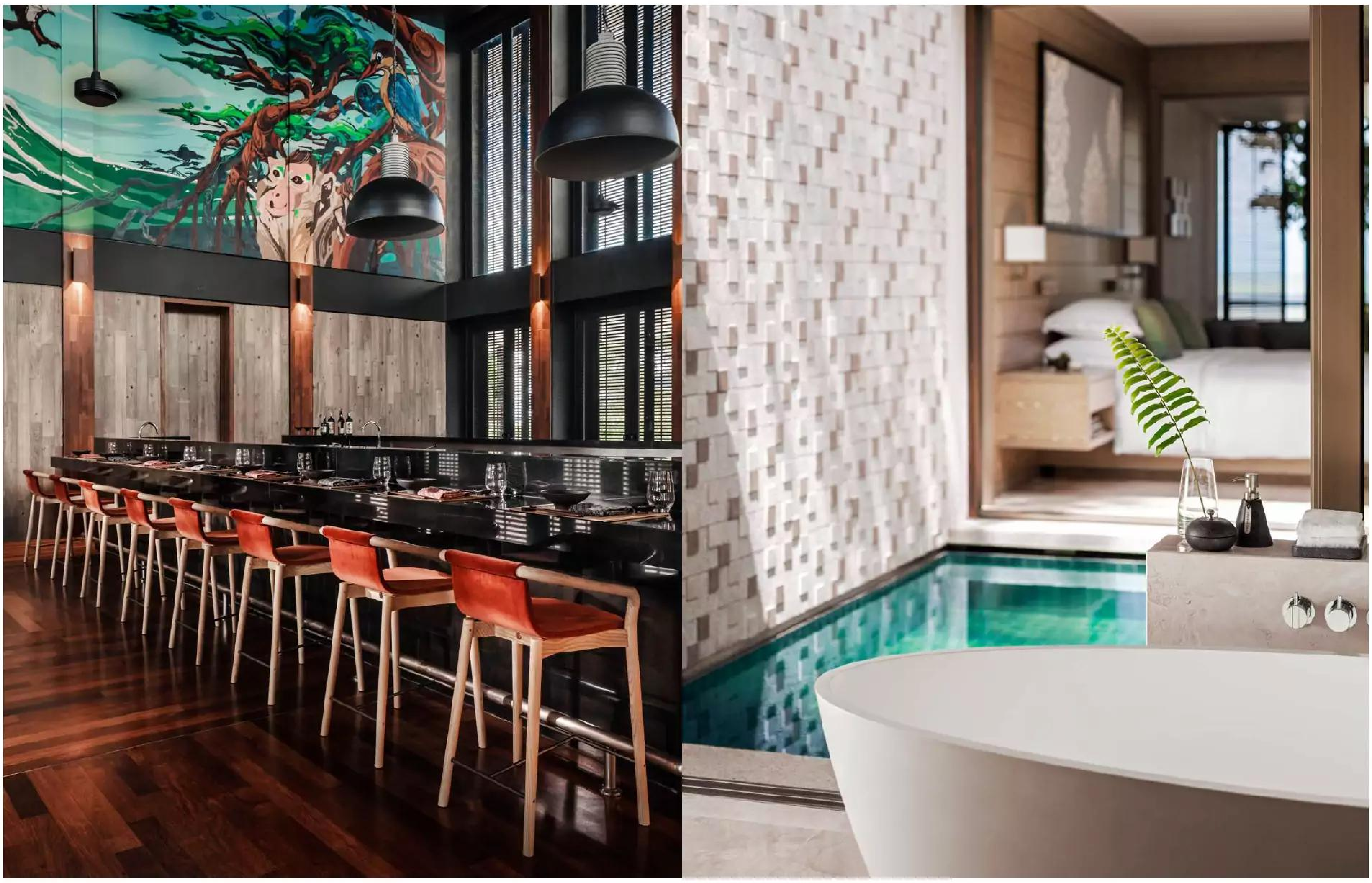
Exploring Melbourne's effortlessly cool food and wine scene should always be top priority when visiting, and you don't need to head far (ground level) before you hit the newly opened **Marmelo** – a coastal Portuguese-inspired restaurant by Ross and Sunny Lusted. Start with crisp, salted Murray cod croquettes or savoury crab-custard pastel de nata before choosing from a tight and tasty list of smaller or made-to-share mains. If you're feeling flirty, a nightcap is only a staircase away: Marmelo's groovy sibling bar **Mr Mills** is just downstairs, pouring creative cocktails, beers and wines. The in-house dining options don't end there; upstairs, rooftop diner **Mid Air** is open from 6.30am, offering snack-forward all-day dining until late. And of course, you're just a short stroll from some of the city's dining institutions, including Embla, Gimlet and Grill Americano.

# SINGAPORE FLING

Whether you're in town for business or pleasure, Singapore provides the perfect launch pad for a long weekend escape to one of these luxury resorts, writes **KARLIE VERKERK.**

PHOTOGRAPHY: JAMES WANT

A canopy of banyan trees creates a leafy frame for the white sand and sparkling water beyond. Sprawled on one of the shaded daybeds, it's easy to see why this is a popular getaway.



**Above: the counter seats at Hoshi at One&Only Desaru Coast; and the interiors of its Ocean Junior Suite. Opposite: Ember Beach Club cabana, One&Only Desaru Coast. PREVIOUS PAGES A seaplane flight to Bawah Reserve in the Anambas archipelago.**

SINGAPORE'S EXCEPTIONAL FOOD SCENE AND diverse culture are obvious drawcards for visitors. But the Lion City's central location also makes it the perfect base to access some of the best luxury resorts in Southeast Asia. Here are our top three picks that are only a stone's throw away.

## ONE&ONLY DESARU COAST

Once you've consumed your body weight in satay and chicken rice at one of Singapore's many hawker halls, a poolside siesta is essential – and there's no better place to rest and digest than One&Only Desaru Coast.

Located just over the border on Malaysia's southeast coast, the tranquil hideaway can be unlocked in less than two hours via a privately chauffeured Mercedes-Benz van, pre-organised by the hotel. Reclined with an ice-cold drink and plantain chips in hand, the journey is so comfortable that you almost forget about the final destination. However, upon arrival, it becomes clear nothing about your stay is going to be remotely forgettable.

Designed by late Singapore-based Australian architect Kerry Hill (whose firm works on Aman projects, among others), One&Only Desaru Coast is a study in elegant minimalism. Despite only opening in 2020, the 45-suite hotel feels embedded in its surroundings – it could be the use of local materials and building techniques, or that every cube-like structure has been placed respectfully within the existing tropical jungle, with green roofs added for insulation and visual harmony.

Stretching from the arrival courtyard down to the pristine oceanfront, the 56-metre, adults-only infinity pool is a highlight of the property. At the far end, a canopy of banyan trees creates a leafy frame for the white sand and sparkling water beyond. Sprawled on one of the shaded daybeds, it's easy to see why this is a popular getaway among expats living nearby.

A more family-friendly hangout can be found a short buggy ride away at the resort's beach club and day-to-night Asian barbecue restaurant, Ember, which is helmed by Michelin-starred chef Andrew Walsh. The only way to top a flame-kissed lunch with a side of sea mist is by dining at the resort's intimate omakase restaurant, Hoshi. While the cuisine may seem slightly out of context, the quality of the seafood and the technically flawless execution of each dish is undeniable.

If a surge of energy hits, try your hand at padel (a racquet sport that's a fusion of tennis and squash) with a private lesson, immediately followed by a bespoke spa treatment at the wellness centre, even if it's just to revel in the dramatic interior architecture and Augustinus Bader products.

From $993 per night for a Rainforest Suite.
*oneandonlyresorts.com/desaru-coast*

Above: poolside at The Datai Langkawi. Below: The Beach Bar at The Datai Langkawi.

The Datai remains one of the best relaxing getaways in the region – and it can be accessed in under two hours from Singapore Changi Airport.

## THE DATAI LANGKAWI

While plenty of shiny new hotels are popping up throughout Southeast Asia, one stalwart continues to deliver: The Datai Langkawi.

Separated from mainland Malaysia by the Strait of Malacca, Langkawi is a geological wonder that was a largely rural area dominated by tropical rainforest until the late '80s. While it's now home to a range of attractions (many of them crawling with tourists), The Datai remains one of the best relaxing getaways in the region – and it can be accessed in under two hours from Singapore Changi Airport, with a hotel transfer waiting at the other end.

The resort itself is grand and showcases an enchanting fusion of Malaysian culture and modern design, with architectural elements inspired by Malay, Chinese, Indian and Bornean traditions. Spread over 500 hectares of undulating rainforest, the 121 rooms, villas and suites are spacious and talk to both luxury and nature. Dusky monkeys, colugos (flying lemurs) and mouse deer are a fraction of the wildlife that can be spotted from your front porch, just don't leave your shoes outside. There's a butterfly walk, too, where specific flowers have been planted to attract hundreds of species of palm-sized butterflies in a kaleidoscope of colours.

Above: One-Bedroom Beach Villa. Below: Rainforest Pool Villa.

Unless you're looking for a serious workout, buggies are essential for getting around the property, whether you're heading to one of the two pools or down to the private bay to explore its white sand and calm waters. Also on-site is an established permaculture garden that supplies fruit, vegetables, herbs and honey to the hotel's restaurants, which is where The Datai's true magic lies.

In addition to outstanding Malaysian and Thai eateries – Gulai House and The Pavilion, respectively – the hotel offers a chef series, where a line-up of world-renowned chefs curate exclusive dining experiences for guests throughout the year. Some upcoming names include Jan Hartwig of three-Michelin-starred JAN in Germany, and Kim Hock Su of one-Michelin-starred Au Jardin in Malaysia. A real drawcard for those interested in high-end dining, with the added bonus of a serene setting.

Good things require time, which is certainly the case for The Datai. It has taken 30-plus years to hone its high attention to detail and level of service, and the offering is better than ever.

From $990 per night for a Canopy Deluxe room (excludes service charge). *thedatai.com*

**Clockwise from left: Bawah Reserve overwater bungalows; The Boat House dining; diving in the coral reef; Beach Suite interiors.**

## BAWAH RESERVE

It's hard to top the Maldives when it comes to luxurious island destinations, but Bawah Reserve in Indonesia's immaculate Anambas archipelago certainly makes a strong case for expanding holiday horizons. Overwater bungalows? Tick! Azure waters brimming with sea turtles? Absolutely! Excellent food and wine served on a pristine beach? You bet!

From Singapore, the journey to Bawah involves a three-step transfer and takes between four and five hours – a ferry ride across the strait to Batam is followed by a brief drive to the airport, then a 75-minute flight in an amphibious 10-seater plane that inserts you directly into paradise. Despite the dot-to-dot logistics, resort staff escort you the entire way, making the trip as seamless as humanly possible.

Within milliseconds of stepping onto the island's blinding shores, stress evaporates like jet fuel in the wind. Sustainability is not just a buzz word here, it's what keeps the place ticking. There's a floating solar farm in the lagoon, a plastic-free policy on land, plus a turtle conservation program, which is led by a specialist team of marine biologists who save eggs from monitor lizards. If you're lucky, you might even get to see them hatch.

The resort's 36 suites, villas and bungalows strike the right balance between convenience and comfort, each one featuring locally sourced materials, earth-friendly amenities (including turtle-safe sunscreen), and a WhatsApp-loaded smartphone that provides a direct line to your private butler, who responds within seconds.

Simply sit and stare into the untouched abyss or dive into the numerous water-based activities on offer, starting with a snorkel at one of the dozen surrounding reefs where you'll come face-to-fin with bumphead parrotfish, clownfish, eagle rays and iridescent blue starfish. A strict marine conservation zone (no fishing or anchoring) means the underwater world is teeming with sealife and a haven for green and hawksbill turtles.

Above water, there's a range of hiking trails, two restaurants – one on the sand, another high in the treetops – an expertly manicured tennis court, wellness pavilion and forest-veiled spa that is the ultimate indulgence. Included in the stay is one treatment per person, per day – which, alone, is worth the trip.

From $3000 per night for two for a Tented Garden Suite (includes meals, activities and daily spa treatments; excludes visas and transfers). *bawahreserve.com*

PHOTOGRAPHY JAMES WANT (THE BOAT HOUSE).

## THE FINER THINGS

**Loud luxury and logomania make a play for suitcase space in this travel wardrobe.**

**1** Panthère de Cartier watch, $13,600, Kennedy. **2** Bliss sunglasses in Raspberry, POA, Phoebe Philo. **3** Solstice crop in Olivine, $120, Peony. **4** Serenade ruched curve pant in Olivine, $120, Peony. **5** LV x TM pool pillow flat comfort mule in Blanc, $1970, Louis Vuitton. **6** Chloé Summer Banana leather-trimmed embroidered raffia tote in Beige, $3240, Net-A-Porter. **7** Greenhouse floral robe in Mist, $449, Oroton. **8** Gradient bezel tennis necklace, $16,500, Cushla Whiting. **9** Eau de Californie Eau de Parfum, $490 for 100ml, Celine. **10** Margot diamond chain ring, $4600, Natasha Schweitzer. **ABOVE** Bawah Reserve, Anambas Archipelago, Indonesia.

MERCHANDISING ALEXANDRA HARRIS.

# Silver Ray

We put luxury cruising to the test and sail the Mediterranean aboard Silversea's newest ship.

HAVING CARVED OUT A REPUTATION FOR ITS intimate luxury experience aboard small ships, Silversea scales up its offering with the newest arrivals to the family – *Silver Ray* and twin sister *Silver Nova* (who arrived first in 2023, followed by *Ray* in 2024). The ultra-luxury vessels accommodate a maximum of 728 guests, whose every whim is catered to by 544 dedicated crew. Prior to their launch, the largest ocean ships in the Silversea canon carried around 600 passengers. The increased capacity brings with it an expanded hospitality offering, while a unique asymmetrical design delivers a sense of openness and space you won't find on other ships. Whether you're lounging poolside or simply catching a ride in the glass-fronted elevator, *Silver Ray* is built to maximise every vantage point and vista as you sail the wide blue yonder. *silversea.com*

WORDS JOANNA HUNKIN. PHOTOGRAPHY LUCIA GRIGGI (CHURCH).

## TRUMP CARD

Silversea's S.A.L.T. (Sea and Land Taste) program aims to immerse travellers deeper into the regional flavours of each destination – whether that's joining a cooking class in the S.A.L.T. Lab, sipping cocktails in the bar, enjoying a bespoke shore excursion, which might see you join an olive harvest in Kusadasi, Turkey, while learning about Anatolian produce and traditions. On board, S.A.L.T. Kitchen serves a sophisticated nightly menu of regional dishes and wines that change with every port, ensuring no two meals are the same. Those who are serious about their food will want to book a seat at the Chef's Table as soon as they board (just ask your friendly butler) to experience an 11-course deep dive into the S.A.L.T. program.

## DINING

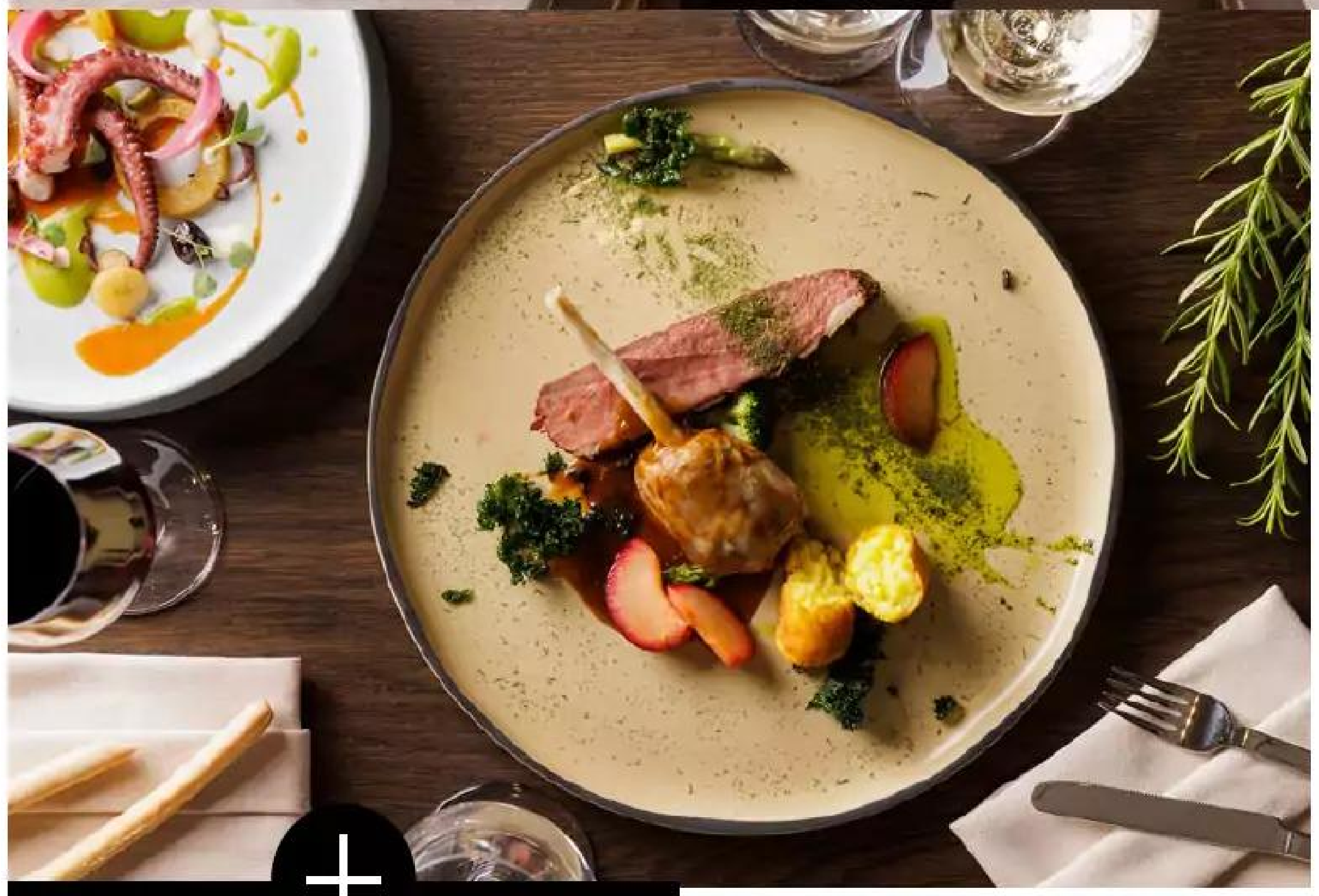
From French fine-dining at La Dame to authentic Italian at La Terrazza (with the option to dine alfresco on the stern deck), you'll find all the classics covered aboard *Silver Ray*. Kaiseki will sate any Japanese cravings, while Spaccanapoli and The Grill offer casual all-day dining, including wood-fired pizze and steak grilled to your liking. Downstairs, Atlantide brings a touch of New York glamour to every voyage, and Silver Note wins the prize for the most in-demand reservation, serving an international menu of small plates paired with live jazz and optional dancing.

## IN THE ROOM

Seasoned cruisers will be more than familiar with the compact living quarters that are part and parcel of cruise life. But not so aboard *Silver Ray*, where an entry level Classic Veranda Suite offers a vast 33 square metres of living space, including an ocean-facing verandah, walk-in robe and separate lounge area that converts into a dining room should you decide to order room service. The most impressive part? The expansive shower and consistent water pressure, which outshines many a five-star hotel.

## PACKING TIPS

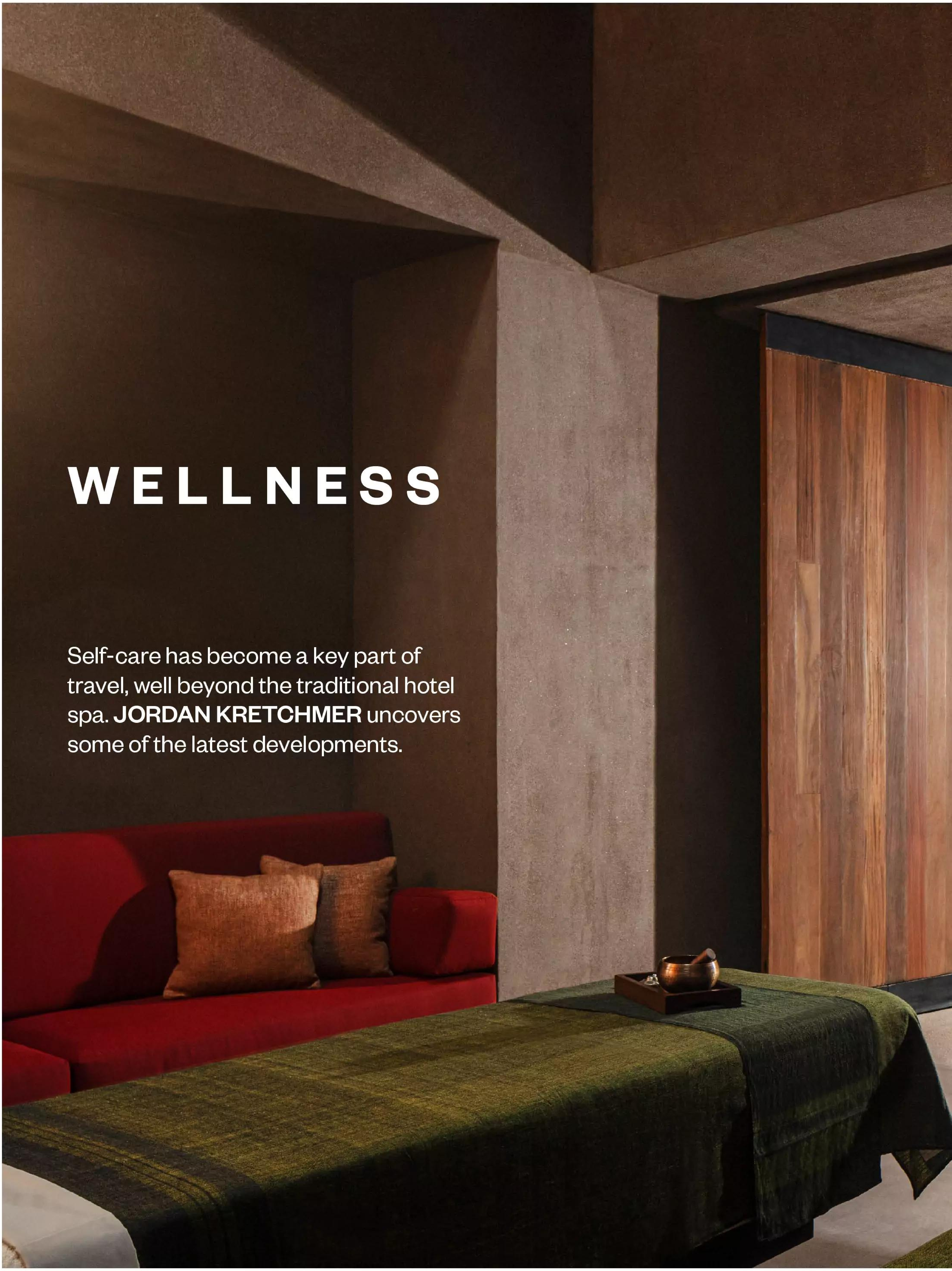
Depending on the length of your cruise, you will need at least a couple of fancy frocks – or a sharp blazer – for formal evenings (once every five to six days of sailing). While a simple cocktail dress will suffice, don't be afraid to break out your best sequins or a full length gown – you will be in good company. Gents who forget to pack a suit jacket will be politely directed to borrow one from the ship's reserves so best plan ahead and avoid the embarrassment. The rest of the time, the dress code is "elegant-casual" which means no shorts or jeans after 6pm.



**Clockwise from left: a spread at S.A.L.T. Kitchen; a cooking class in the S.A.L.T. Lab; the Master Suite interiors. Opposite: Silver Ray's pool deck; Anastaseos Church, Syros.**

## BY THE NUMBERS

**Guests** 728
**Crew ratio** 728:544
**Cabins** 363 across nine decks.
**Dining** Nine restaurants and four bars.
**Children** Allowed but not specifically catered to.
**2025 season** Will see *Silver Ray* head to the Mediterranean from April to November, before crossing the Atlantic for a winter season in Florida.
**Pricing** From $7150 per guest for a 7-day sailing between Rome and Monte Carlo (shore excursions not included).
*silversea.com*

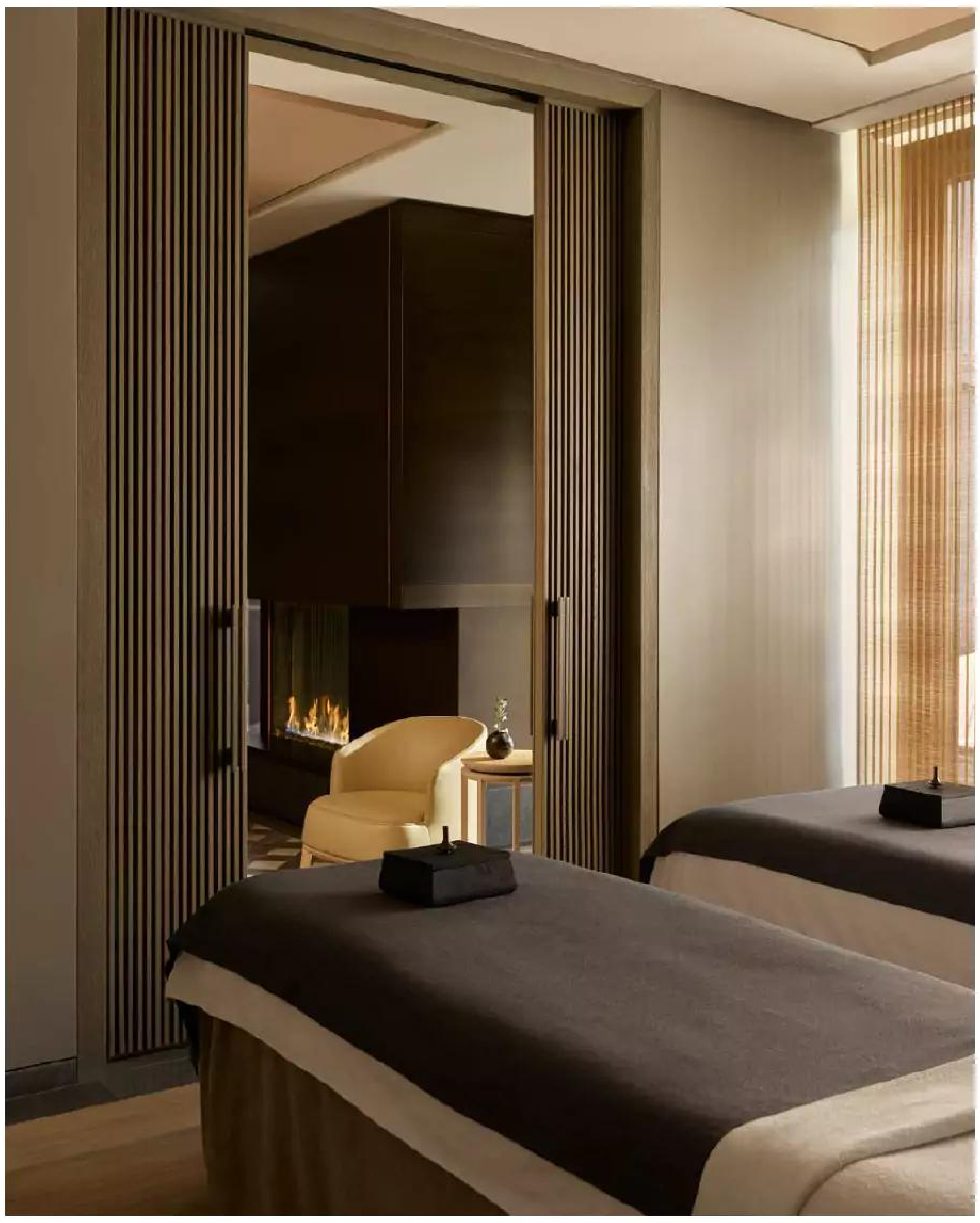


# WELLNESS

Self-care has become a key part of travel, well beyond the traditional hotel spa. **JORDAN KRETCHMER** uncovers some of the latest developments.

# REDEFINED

PHOTOGRAPHY RUPERT PEACE.



THE HEALTH AND WELLNESS INDUSTRY HAS NEVER BEEN bigger, and while we'd all love to make it an everyday priority, it's during our travels that it really gets our full focus. As our appetite for self-care grows and evolves, so do the offerings in the world of hospitality. Transformative travel has emerged as a strong trend, where holidays aren't just a time out, but an opportunity for major change, whether physically, spiritually or mentally. At the other end of the spectrum, hotels are making it their business to champion wellbeing during business travel. And in between, there are ancient rituals, luxury fashion houses hosting haute retreats and more. We've scoured the globe for the most intriguing new wellness concepts to add to your (longevity) lust list.

## AMAN NEW YORK, USA

**GO FOR: An elite athlete's fitness secrets**

In recruiting tennis legend Maria Sharapova as global wellness ambassador, Aman is putting fitness firmly at the heart of its approach. Individually designed to complement each Aman location, Sharapova's program makes its debut at Aman New York, where the luxury quarters offer respite from the city that never sleeps. Combined with an optimised performance breakfast, the half-day program includes a strength and conditioning session created by the grand slam winner, followed by a Banya sauna or Hammam treatment, rounded out with reflexology and a skin mask in the hotel's private spa. If the workout element isn't your idea of a holiday, there's plenty of less intense sanctuary to be found in the 2300 square metres of space dedicated to wellbeing, from the cryotherapy chamber to infrared body rolls. *aman.com*

**Clockwise from top: Aman New York pool; and treatment room. Opposite, from top: Six Senses Fiji pool; The Beverly Hills Hotel treatment rooms. PREVIOUS PAGES One&Only Mandarina couples treatment room.**

PHOTOGRAPHY ROBERT RIEGER (AMAN POOL).

## SIX SENSES FIJI, MALOLO ISLAND, FIJI

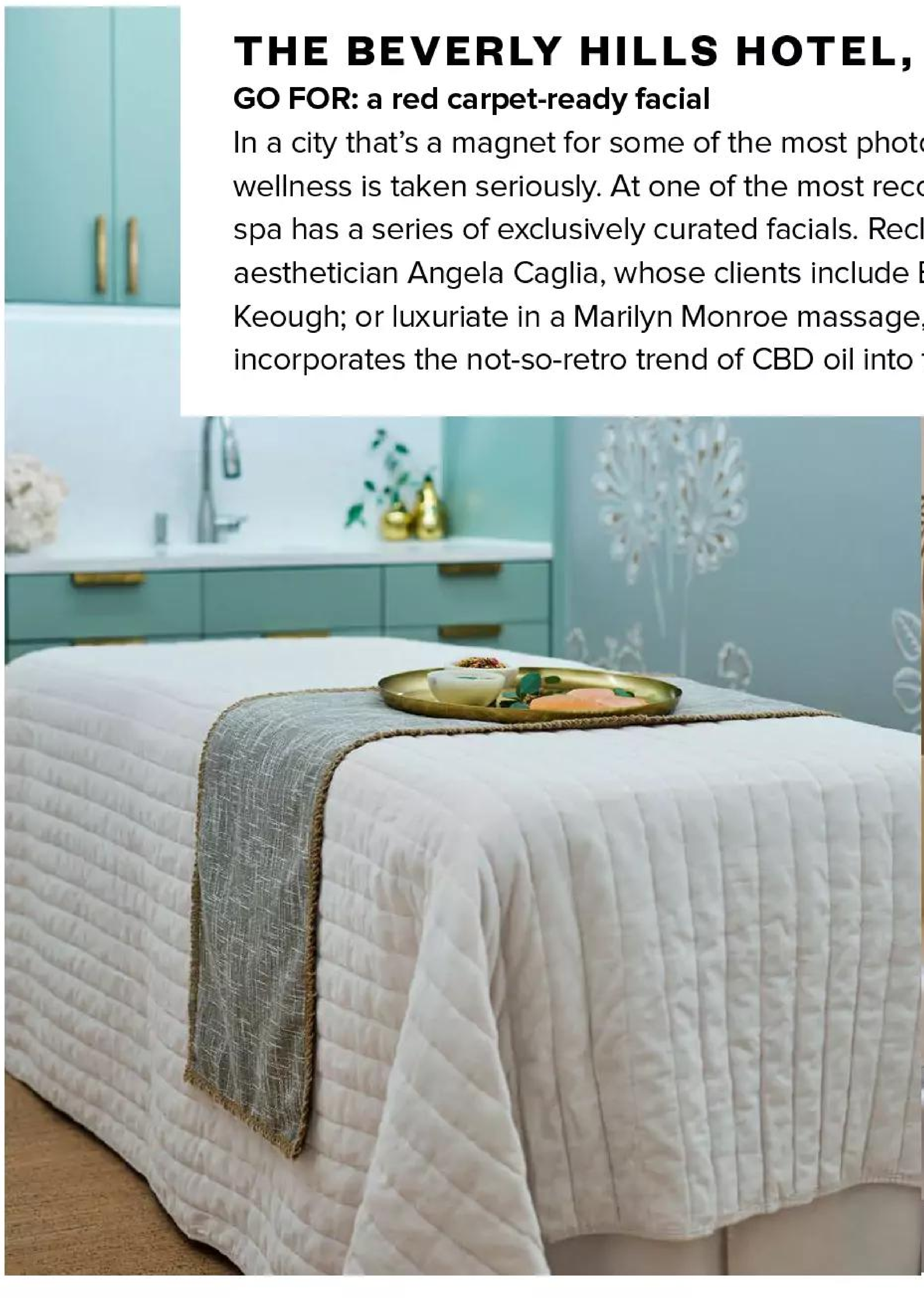
**GO FOR: levelling up your tabletop**

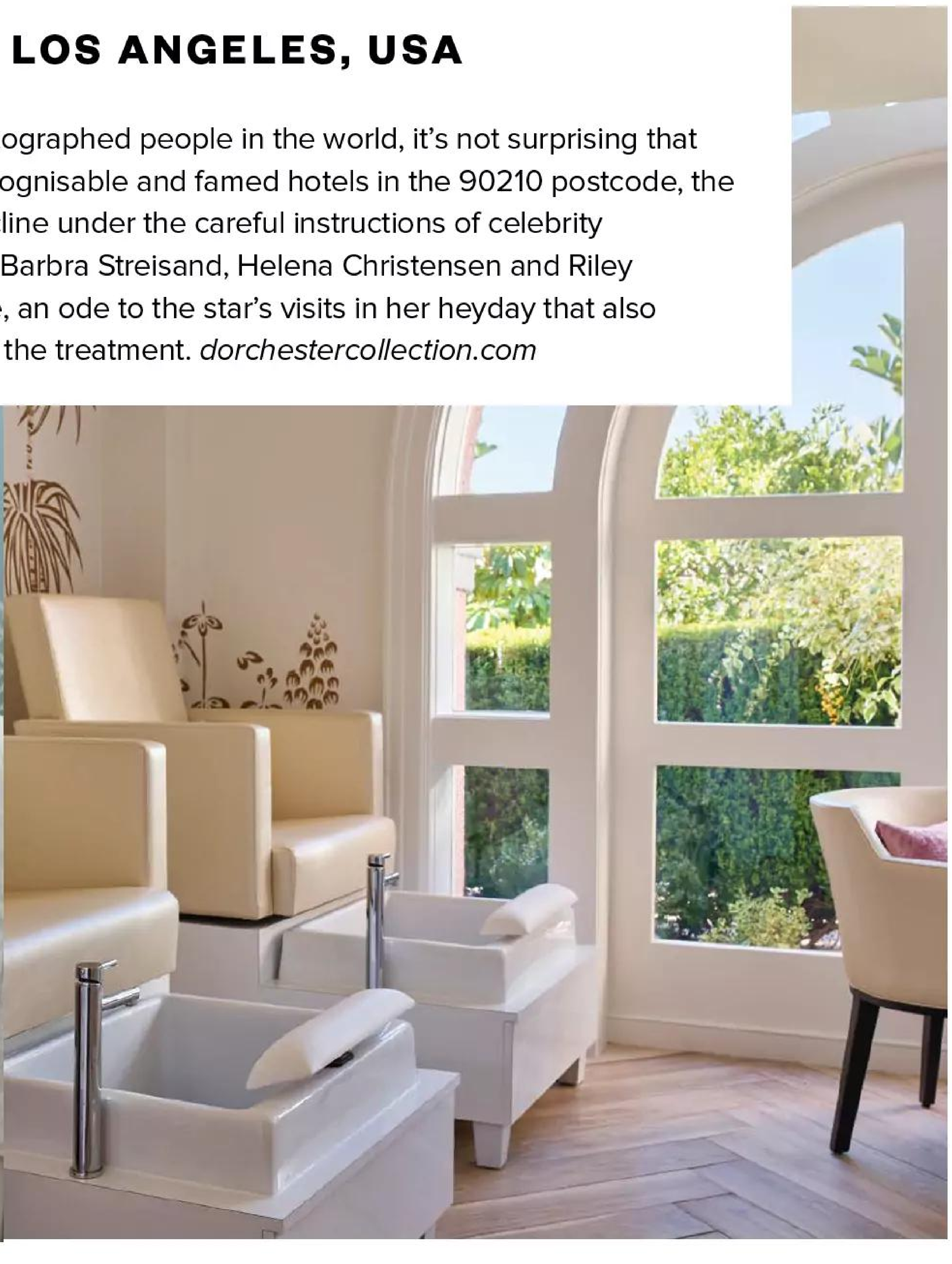
Having long been the go-to strength regimen for dancers and celebrities, Pilates has experienced even more of a spike in recent years to become one of Australia's most popular fitness genres. Sydney-based Fluidform is a leader in the area and has partnered with Six Senses Fiji for an exclusive wellness retreat that runs June 12 to 16. With the tropical haven of Malolo Island as the backdrop, guests can expect twice-daily Pilates sessions, hot and cold plunges, sound healing and sunrise hikes. Combined with morning tonics, daily juices and garden-to-plate lunches, this is as much about culinary nourishment as it is movement, to ensure all your planks and V sits are aptly fuelled. *sixsenses.com*

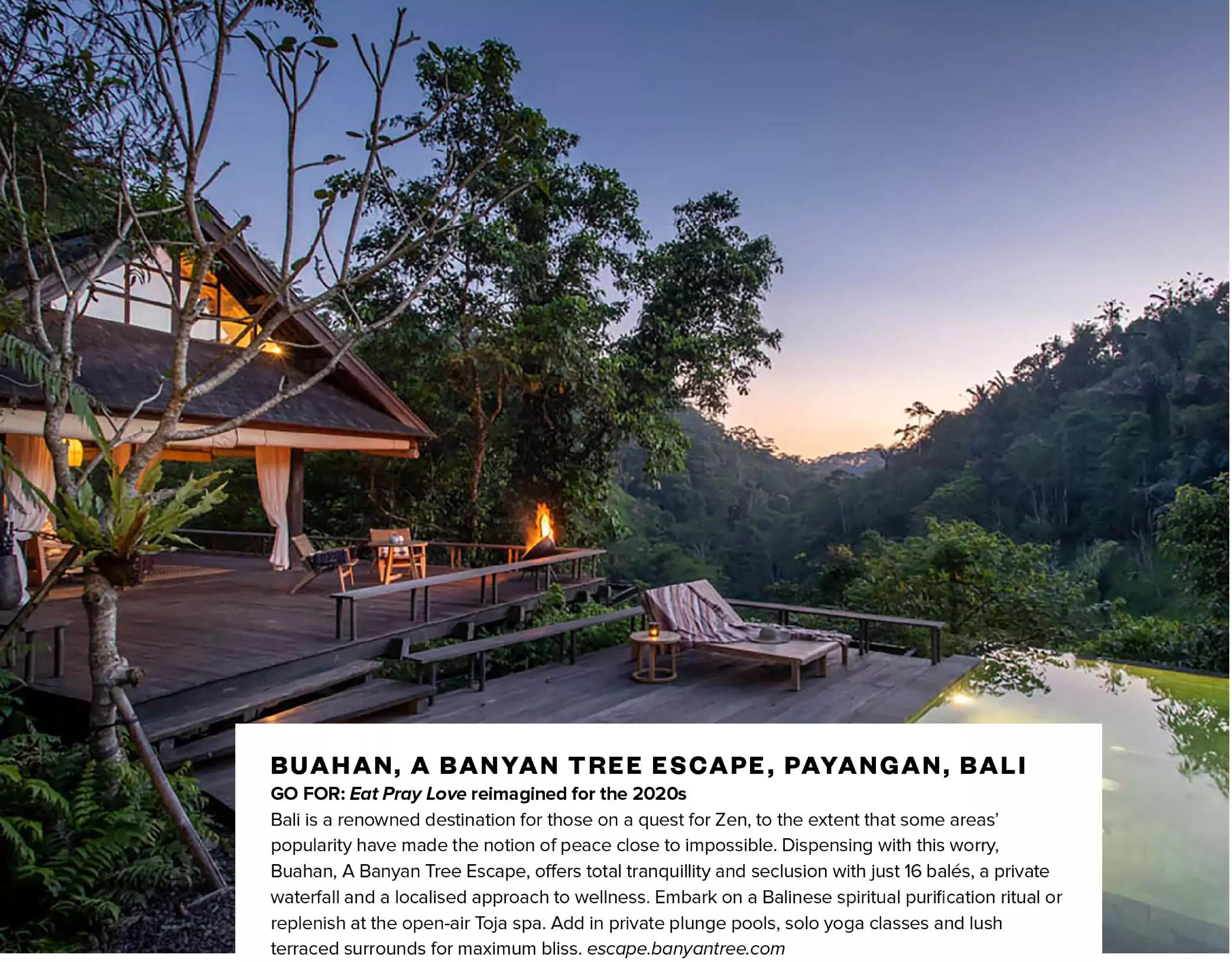
## THE BEVERLY HILLS HOTEL, LOS ANGELES, USA

**GO FOR: a red carpet-ready facial**

In a city that's a magnet for some of the most photographed people in the world, it's not surprising that wellness is taken seriously. At one of the most recognisable and famed hotels in the 90210 postcode, the spa has a series of exclusively curated facials. Recline under the careful instructions of celebrity aesthetician Angela Caglia, whose clients include Barbra Streisand, Helena Christensen and Riley Keough; or luxuriate in a Marilyn Monroe massage, an ode to the star's visits in her heyday that also incorporates the not-so-retro trend of CBD oil into the treatment. *dorchestercollection.com*







## BUAHAN, A BANYAN TREE ESCAPE, PAYANGAN, BALI

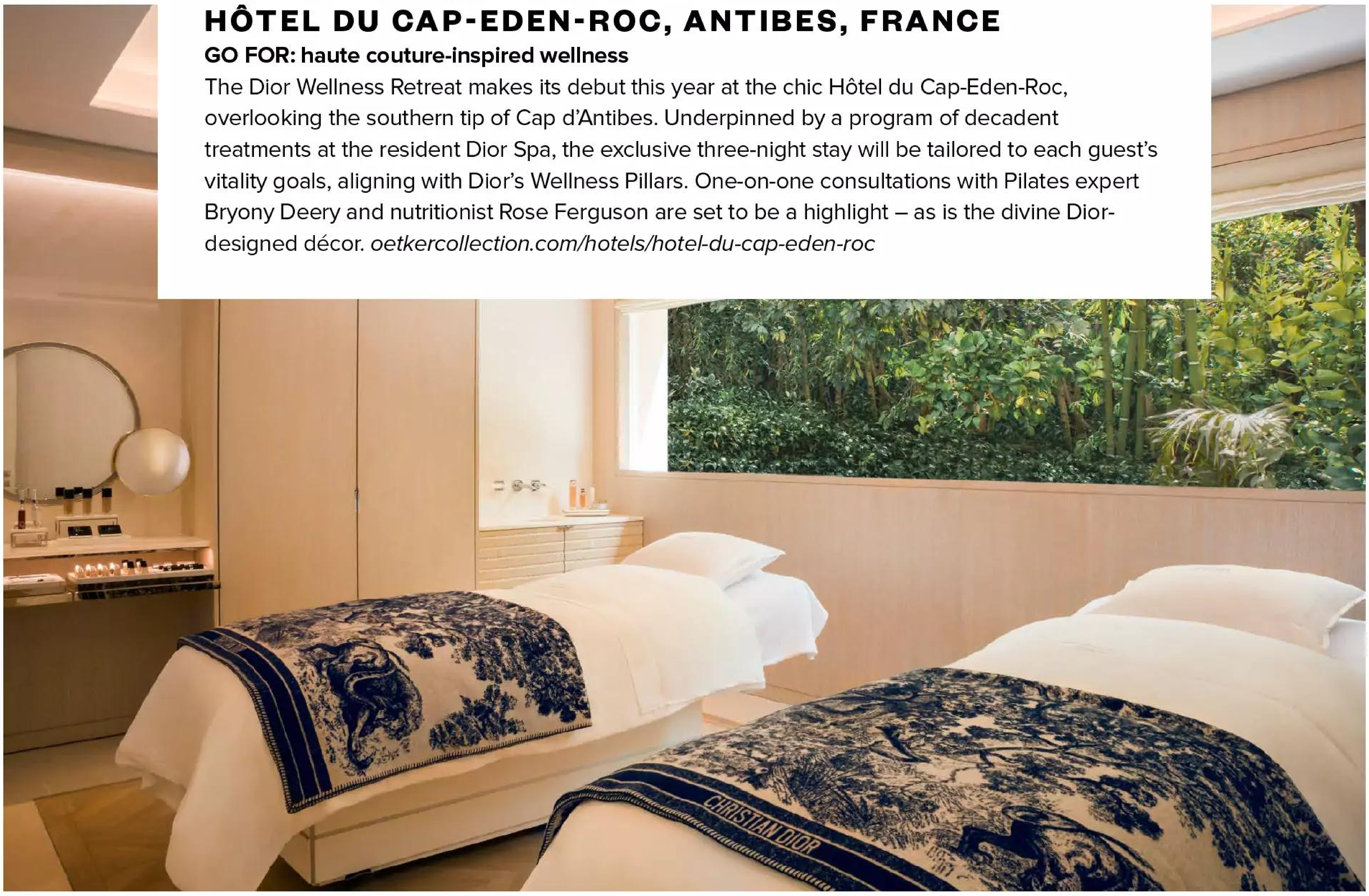
**GO FOR:** ***Eat Pray Love*** **reimagined for the 2020s**

Bali is a renowned destination for those on a quest for Zen, to the extent that some areas' popularity have made the notion of peace close to impossible. Dispensing with this worry, Buahan, A Banyan Tree Escape, offers total tranquillity and seclusion with just 16 balés, a private waterfall and a localised approach to wellness. Embark on a Balinese spiritual purification ritual or replenish at the open-air Toja spa. Add in private plunge pools, solo yoga classes and lush terraced surrounds for maximum bliss. *escape.banyantree.com*

## DIOR WELLNESS RETREAT AT HÔTEL DU CAP-EDEN-ROC, ANTIBES, FRANCE

**GO FOR: haute couture-inspired wellness**

The Dior Wellness Retreat makes its debut this year at the chic Hôtel du Cap-Eden-Roc, overlooking the southern tip of Cap d'Antibes. Underpinned by a program of decadent treatments at the resident Dior Spa, the exclusive three-night stay will be tailored to each guest's vitality goals, aligning with Dior's Wellness Pillars. One-on-one consultations with Pilates expert Bryony Deery and nutritionist Rose Ferguson are set to be a highlight – as is the divine Dior-designed décor. *oetkercollection.com/hotels/hotel-du-cap-eden-roc*



PHOTOGRAPHY RUPERT PEACE (ONE&ONLY MANDARINA), MATTHIEU SALVAING (DIOR WELLNESS RETREAT) & AUGUSTINE WONG (MONTENEGRO, CYCLISTS).

## ONE&ONLY MANDARINA, MEXICO

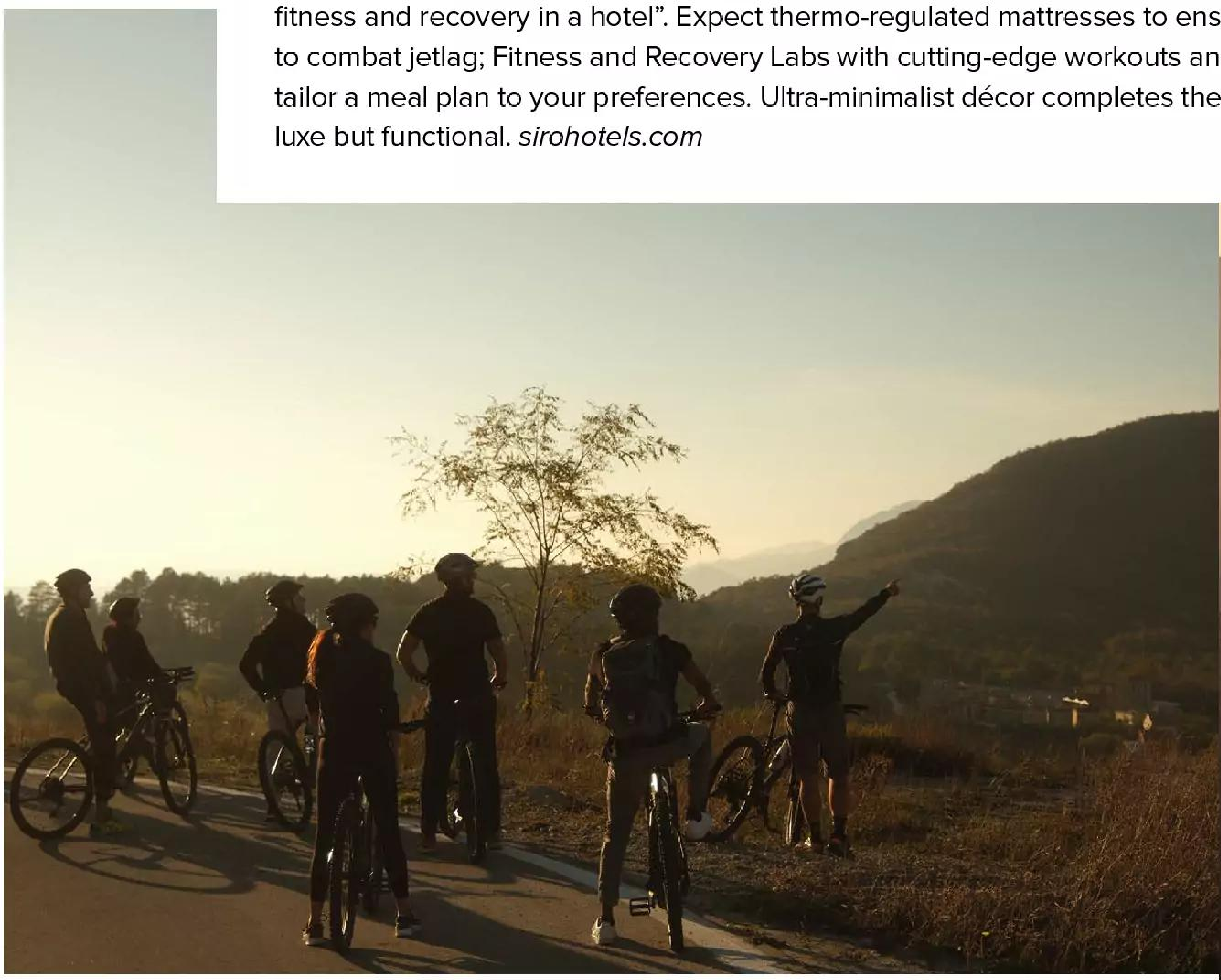
**GO FOR: ancient rituals reframed for the modern traveller**

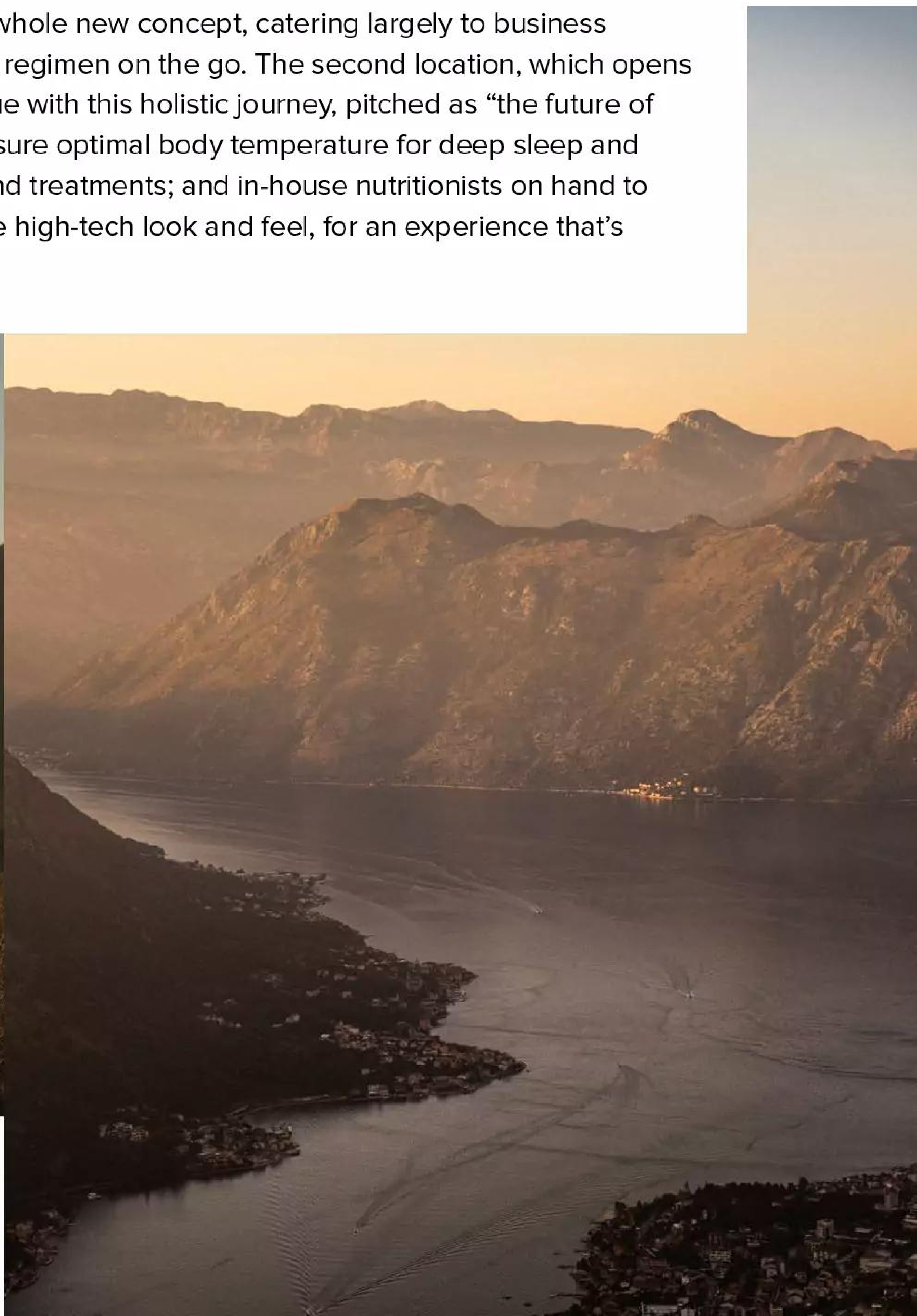
Twice making it into the World's 50 Best Hotels list, this jungle-meets-beachfront hideaway offers some of the most serene accommodation on Mexico's Pacific Coast. Among the treetop villas, a private butler can whisk you away to a joyful cacao ceremony and a guided meditation where you can reflect and explore personal goals with a local spiritual guide. Or try temazcal, an intensive Mayan ceremony performed in a "house of heat" that bolsters health and encourages purification. Because life is all about balance you can also enjoy a meal at one of the country's most awarded chef's restaurant, Carao, by Pujol chef Enrique Olvera; or opt for a different type of unwinding with a high-end mezcal and tequila tasting. *oneandonlyresorts.com*

## SIRO BOKA PLACE, MONTENEGRO

**GO FOR: a high-end hotel dedicated to active lifestyle**

Opening its doors in February, the first SIRO hotel – in Dubai – unveiled a whole new concept, catering largely to business travellers and frequent flyers keen to preserve and enhance their wellness regimen on the go. The second location, which opens this May in Montenegro's UNESCO-protected Bay of Kotor, is set to continue with this holistic journey, pitched as "the future of fitness and recovery in a hotel". Expect thermo-regulated mattresses to ensure optimal body temperature for deep sleep and to combat jetlag; Fitness and Recovery Labs with cutting-edge workouts and treatments; and in-house nutritionists on hand to tailor a meal plan to your preferences. Ultra-minimalist décor completes the high-tech look and feel, for an experience that's luxe but functional. *sirohotels.com*





SOUTH-WEST VICTORIA / GUNDITJMARA

# Port Fairy

We hit the road for a weekend escape, exploring the best regional Australia has to offer. This month, we head to the seaside.

WORDS **MICHAEL HARRY**

## THE REGION

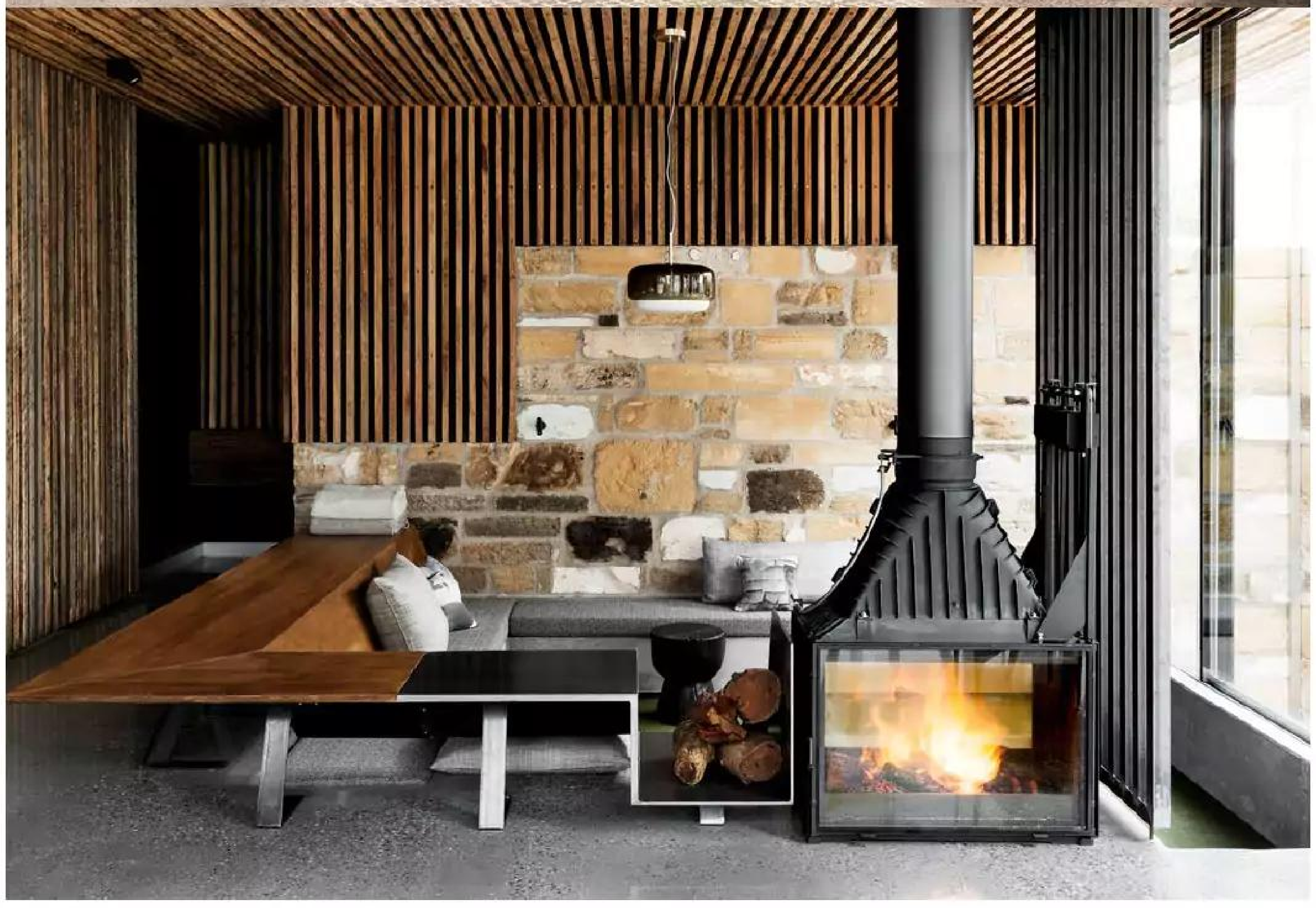
The elegance of the Hamptons meets the history of Hobart in Port Fairy, which was officially named in 1828. Formerly known as Belfast, the town is centred around a picturesque wharf once used by whalers and seal hunters. These days it's an upscale holiday town, with boutiques and dining options on the main drag of Sackville Street, and one of the most respected music festivals in the country – Port Fairy Folk Festival – attracting big names each March. There are several stunning beaches to enjoy, including the popular family swimming spot Pea Soup, and a gorgeous lighthouse walk on Griffiths Island, with a windswept shearwater bird colony accessible via pedestrian bridge. The wider region has been home to the Gunditjmara people for more than 30,000 years, and the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape – officially named a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2019 – is an easy drive away and worth a detour. The Tae Rak Aquaculture Centre offers guided tours of sophisticated Indigenous eel traps, which date back 6600 years. *budjbim.com.au*

PHOTOGRAPHY ADOBE STOCK IMAGES.

## STAY

Singular and stunning, a stay at **Drift House** is like dropping in to a well-heeled private home, brimming with intimate hospitality and impeccable taste. Stylish sea-changers John Watkinson and Colleen Guiney first fell in love with Port Fairy – a charming hamlet at the end of the Great Ocean Road around 300 kilometres from Melbourne – when they visited nearly 20 years ago. In 2013, they opened the small luxury hotel from the bones of a Victorian house and an Edwardian villa on the Moyne River. Architecture firm Multiplicity created the six boutique suites, and each has its own personality. King size beds are swathed in Cultiver linens, there's a "maxi bar" stocked with local treats, bathtubs for soaking, and innovative design details blending heritage and contemporary finishes.

A Ploughman's-style breakfast is included each morning in the Salon, a central lounge described as a communal space designed as "if Frank Lloyd-Wright, Issey Miyake and the Dalai Lama got together". The dining offering has recently expanded – dinner is now available on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday nights from 6pm – with self-taught chef Watkinson bringing his love for rustic Spanish cuisine to a punchy, snack-friendly à la carte menu. Locally sourced seafood and seasonal produce from the on-site kitchen garden feature in clever dishes from tender charred octopus rubbed in smoky paprika to velvety, bittersweet Basque cheesecake. *drifthouse.com.au*



PHOTOGRAPHY CAMERON MURRAY (MERRIJIG INN). JO O'KEEFE (THE STUMP). MARTINA GEMMOLA (DRIFT HOUSE).

## EAT

The town still misses fine-diner Fen, which closed in 2023, but there are plenty more offerings to discover. **Coffin Sally** is a lively pizza joint in a former undertaker's building with a sharp list of thin-crust pizze and impressive cocktails (grab a spot at the bar for the best view). A few doors down, **West Beach Cantina** is a casual taco spot with a range of board games, while **Poco Artisan Gelato** nearby offers generous scoops of Italian-style ice-cream.

THE CALEDONIAN INN
THE STUMP
PORT FAIRY

**Clockwise from top: Drift House façade; the Salon at Drift House; the bar at Merrijig Inn; The Stump; pizza at Coffin Sally. Opposite: Port Fairy Lighthouse on Griffiths Island.**

## DRINK

**Merrijig Inn** is billed as Victoria's oldest inn, with a wine-driven front bar and a dining room open from Friday to Monday. Its garden is the spot for sipping gin in the sunshine in the summer months. **Basalt Wines** is a local winery of note, with a Med-inspired menu and cool-climate drops. For pub fare, try **Sidro** at the revamped Oak and Anchor Hotel or the original gem **The Stump** – Victoria's oldest continually licensed pub – for top-notch pub grub and a bustling beer garden.

ARANCINI 4 ALL
GLUTEN FREE ARANCINI SPECIALISTS
ESTABLISHED IN 2018 MADE IN AUSTRALIA

ARANCINI 4 ALL
Created by 2 passionate chefs for retail & food service.

arancini4all.com.au
info@arancini4all

EXPERIENCE THE BEST OF ITALY ON A RELAXED, *small group tour*

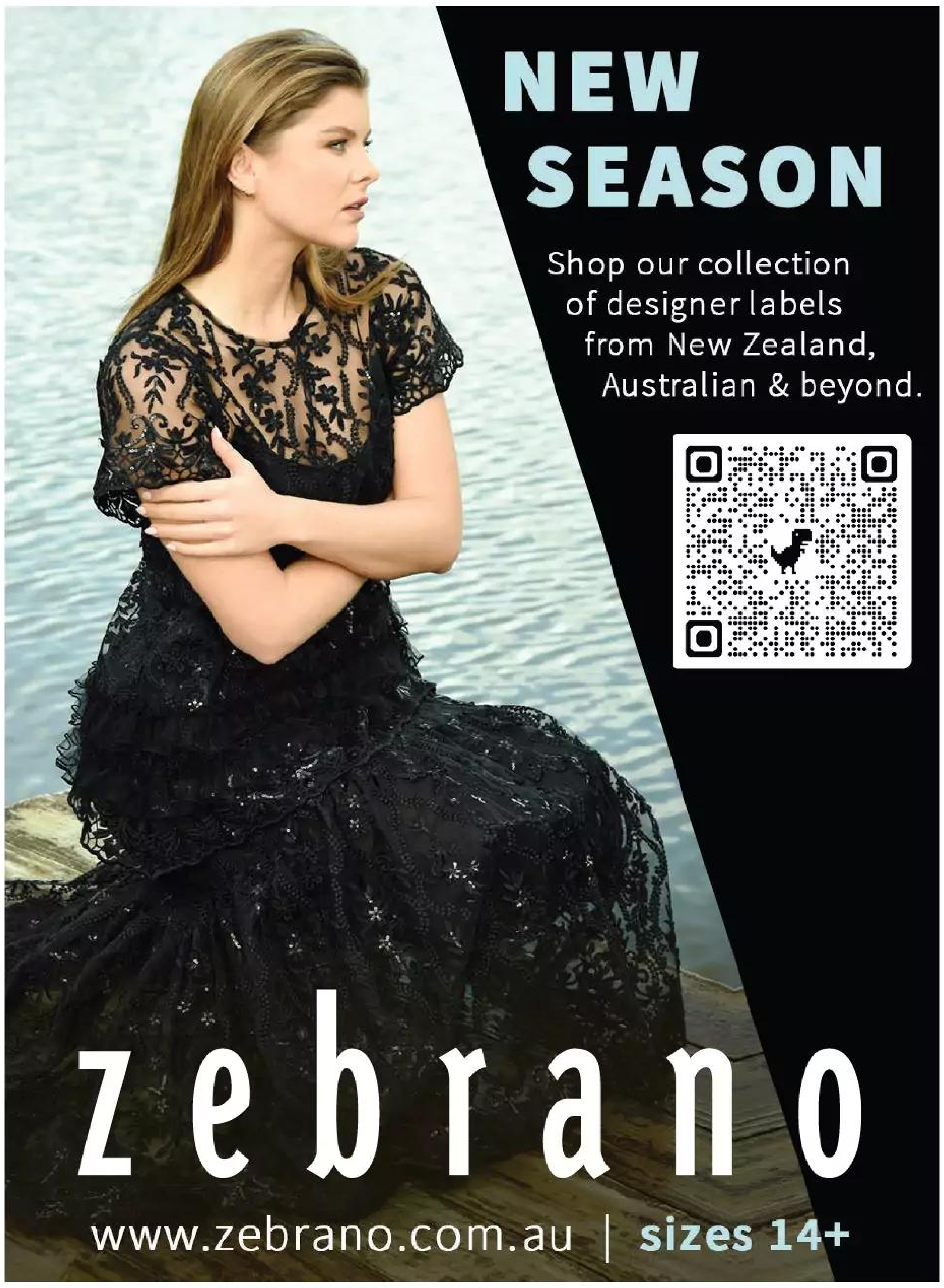
Tours to Puglia, the Italian Lakes, Venice and the Dolomites in 2025.
Book now | info@italiantours.com.au
italiantours.com.au | 02 9358 4923

ITALIAN TOURS

Chocolatier AUSTRALIA

Our range of Easter lines are available in Myer stores Nationally and specialty independent stores

**CHOCOLATIER.COM.AU**



**NEW SEASON**

Shop our collection of designer labels from New Zealand, Australian & beyond.

zebrano

www.zebrano.com.au | **sizes 14+**

## ESCAPE TO THE TROPICS

**Book direct & save up to 25% off your tropical getaway***

Family owned and operated, Port Douglas Getaways has exclusively serviced the beachside region for over 25 years. We offer the premier choice of holiday accommodation, with 60+ luxury properties ranging from absolute beachfront abodes to private hideaways - all in the heart of Port Douglas. Book with us today. Paradise awaits.

☎ 07 4099 4789
www.portdouglasgetaways.com.au

BOOK DIRECT AND SAVE!

Port Douglas Getaways

*see website or enquire for applicable dates

TO *ADVERTISE* CONTACT
GOURMETTRAVELLERDIRECTORIES@AREMEDIA.COM.AU

**Hidden Italy**
FOR INQUISITIVE TRAVELLERS

**Hidden Italy 2026 guided tours are now open for booking!**

We are pleased to announce that the Hidden Italy guided tours for 2026 are now open for booking. All the old favourites are there, including 'Verona and the Dolomites'; 'Sicily' and 'Puglia', plus some new 'off-the-beaten track' itineraries such as 'Campania and the Amalfi Coast' and 'Turin and the Val d'Aosta'. We have also introduced a special, super-small tour (7 guests maximum): 'Rome, Abruzzo and Molise: from the mountains to the sea.'

Places on these tours tend to fill up quickly, so get your skates on, 2026 is just around the corner!

www.hiddenitaly.com.au

**Tours for**
*"Independent Thinking"*
**Women**

*Ph: +61 0433255472*
*www.toursforwomen.global*

long lunch linen

French linen tablecloths
for **long tables**
longlunchlinen.com.au

foodiam • TRAVEL •

Morocco • India • Spain • Northern Italy • Sicily
Puglia • Bhutan • Vietnam • Croatia

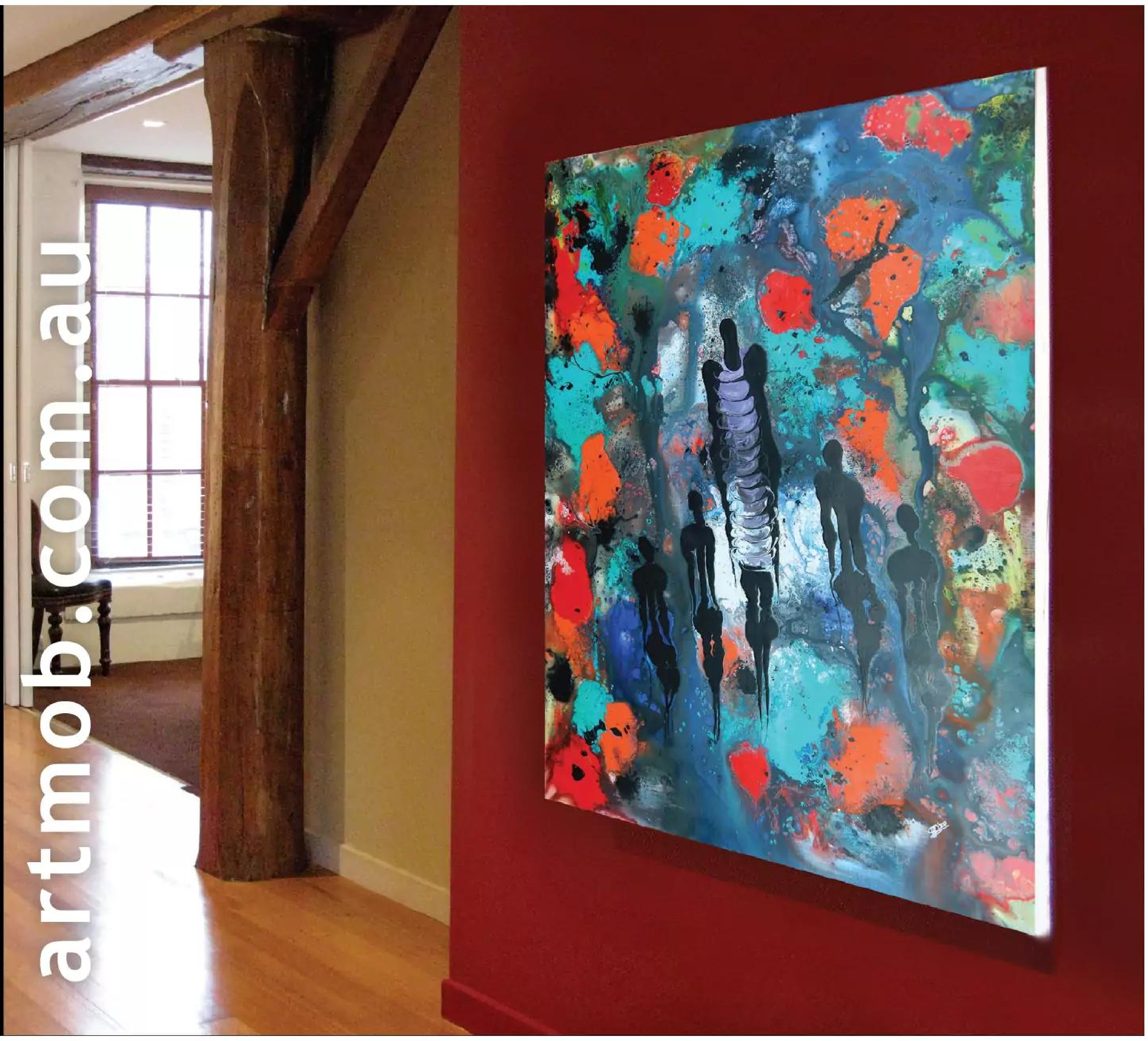
Hosted or Private Groups | Small Group
Unique Food, Wine & Cultural Experiences

**ART MOB**

**Aboriginal Fine Art**

AM 23144/24
*Silas Hobson*
My Family... My Country 2018
Acrylic on linen
127 x 98cm

29 Hunter Street
Hobart Tasmania 7000
Ph +61 3 6236 9200
euan@artmob.com.au


artmob.com.au

TO *ADVERTISE* CONTACT
GOURMETTRAVELLERDIRECTORIES@AREMEDIA.COM.AU

rose@missrosesisterviolet.com (08) 8278 8675

Australian Owned

## MISS ROSE SISTER VIOLET

DREAMY…ETHEREAL…VINTAGE
SEASONAL…IN STORE NOW

## ALTINA

The non-alcoholic
wine for wine lovers

ENJOY 15% OFF
WITH CODE GT25

www.altinadrinks.com

PREMIUM GREEK FOOD PRODUCTS
THAT BRING THE AUTHENTIC TASTE
OF GREECE RIGHT TO YOUR TABLE

## THE GREEK PROVIDORE

bringing **greece** home

**visit us online @**
**thegreekprovidore.com.au**

We ship Australia wide

*Active journeys*
*authentic experiences*
*fabulous food & wine*
*and a touch of luxury*

## EPICURIOUS travel

### VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA IN STYLE

Discover the highlights of these fascinating countries focusing on their rich culture, cuisine and people. Explore the fabulous cities of Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh and the treasures of Angkor Wat on this luxurious journey over 13 sensational days, including 4 nights on the Mekong River aboard the stunning Aqua Mekong as we sail between Vietnam and Cambodia. We have the opportunity to visit remote villages, shop at local markets and engage with traditional artisans and farming communities.

***TOUR DATE:***
*26 November -*
*8 December, 2025*

P 03 9380 4461 W epicurioustravel.com.au

The Montauk Lighting Co. brings Australia distinctive, quality feature lighting, created by acclaimed international designers including Ralph Lauren, AERIN and Kelly Wearstler through Visual Comfort, along with Tom Dixon, Haberdashery and Authentage. Let us help you *make a statement in light.*

montauklightingco.com
08 9380 6239

*Interiors by Steve Cordony*
*Photo by Felix Forest*

*Featuring 'Riley' Chandelier*
*by Ralph Lauren Home*

THE
MONTAUK
LIGHTING
CO.

# Home

**Natural element**
PAGE 150

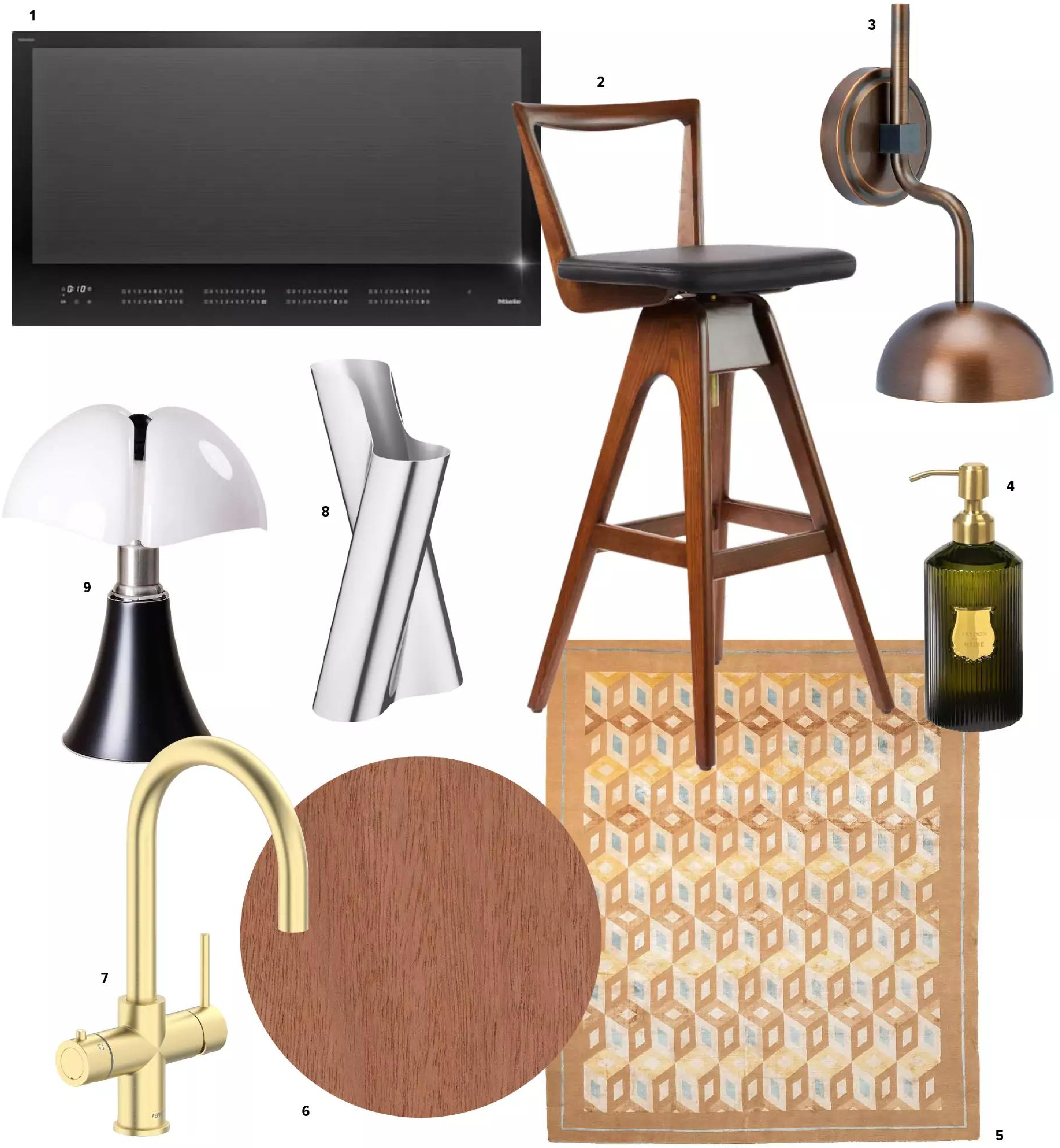
**Object of desire**
PAGE 154

**Renaissance Villa Renée by Luigi Rosselli Architects.**

PHOTOGRAPHY PRUE RUSCOE. INTERIOR STYLING HANDELSMANN + KHAW.

## NATURAL ELEMENT

**Textural timber dominates the kitchen, while brass fittings and a crescent window keep interiors light.**



**1** KM 7897-2 FL Diamond induction cooktop, $8399, Miele. **2** Danish bar stool in Dark Ash, $1330, TH Brown. **3** Leah Martin Remmy wall light in Aged Brass, POA, Bloomingdales Lighting. **4** Médie liquid soap, $159, Trudon. **5** Le Marais rug in Caramel, $11,000, Tigmi Trading. **6** Light Jarrah TrueScale Natural Woodgrain, POA, Laminex. **7** Peppy Taps 4-in-1 filtered boiling, filtered ambient, hot and cold tap in Brass Gold, $2999, Harvey Norman. **8** Lituus large vase, $320, Georg Jensen. **9** Pipistrello Medio lamp, $4880, Tigmi Trading. **OPPOSITE** Renaissance Villa Renée kitchen by Luigi Rosselli Architects.

PHOTOGRAPHY PRUE RUSCOE. INTERIOR STYLING HANDELSMANN + KHAW. MERCHANDISING ALEXANDRA HARRIS.

# CHARACTER ACTORS

**Heritage dining gets a bohemian upgrade with a provincial arch and washes of walnut wood.**

1

2

3

7

6

5

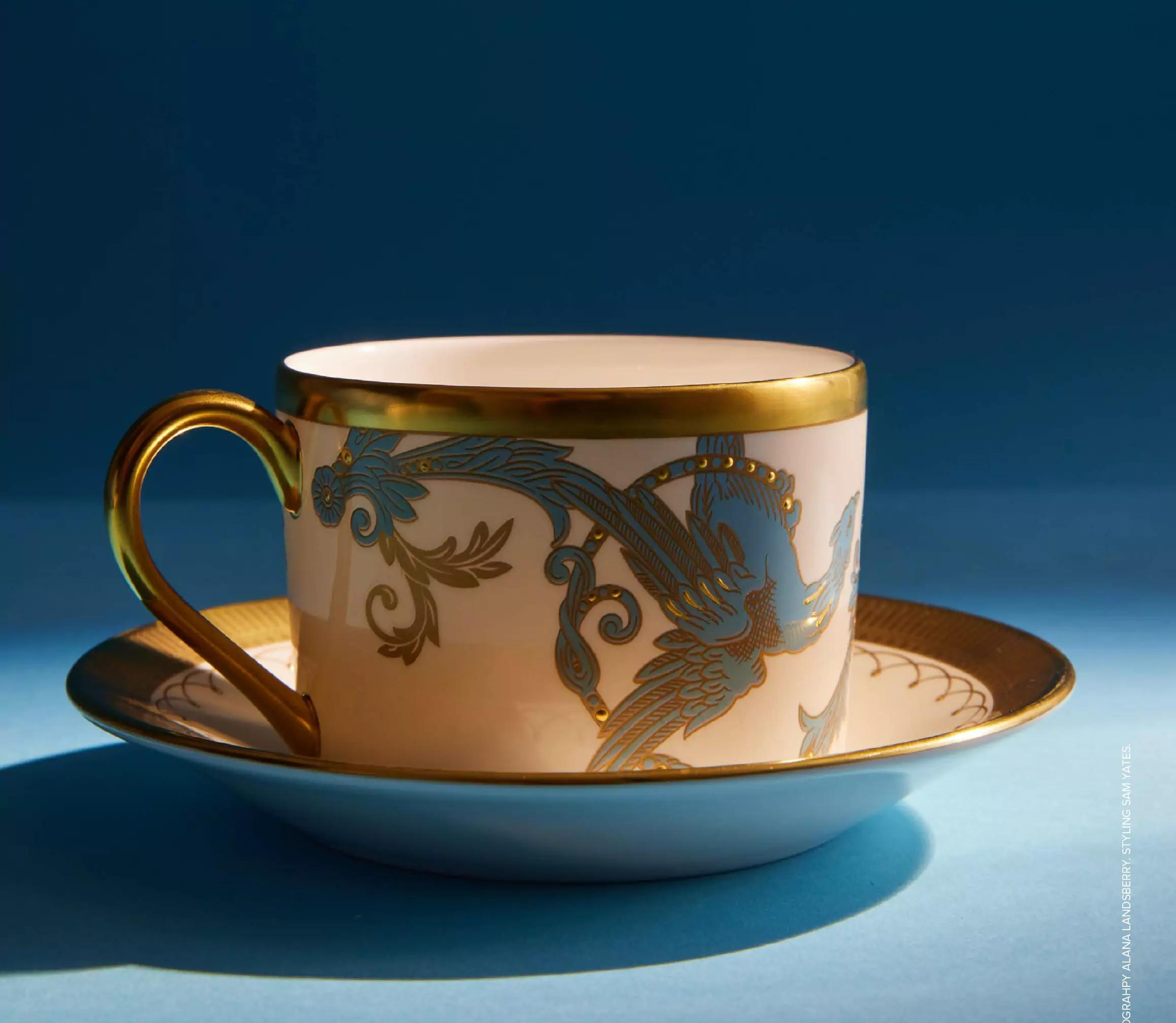
4

**1** Gubi Howard Chandelier 6-arm, from $3499, Cult. **2** Kelly Wearstler Armato table lamp in Porous White, $1690, Oscar & Mila. **3** Granite chenille armchair in Green, $1899, Kave Home. **4** Linen curtain in White, $220, Cultiver. **5** Manta chair S43P by Rodrigo Torres, from $2570, Poliform. **6** Brown Palm vase, $1600, Coast Store. **7** Florence oval reclaimed teak indoor dining table, $2999, Living by Design. **OPPOSITE** Renaissance Villa Renée dining room by Luigi Rosselli Architects.

PHOTOGRAPHY PRUE RUSCOE. INTERIOR STYLING HANDELSMANN + KHAW. MERCHANDISING ALEXANDRA HARRIS.

# FLIGHT OF FANCY

**Fine bone china elevates the humble tea break, allowing routine to rebrand itself as ritual.**



A symbol of rebirth since the time of ancient Greece, the phoenix was famous for rising from its own ashes. Never has there been a more fitting metaphor for the transformative properties of tea. Calling on more than 265 years of craftmanship, Wedgwood's Phoenix collection depicts the mythical creature taking flight across delicate bone china, handpainted and embellished with 22-carat gold detailing. An ideal way to celebrate those precious moments of pause in an otherwise hectic schedule. Hot tip: works just as well for accommodating a latte, though don't tell the tea purists we said that.

*Phoenix teacup and saucer, $899, wedgwood.com.au*

WORDS CERI DAVID. PHOTOGRAHPY ALANA LANDSBERRY. STYLING SAM YATES.

GOURMET
TRAVELLER
JOURNEYS
TABERNA

SPECIAL EDITION COFFEE TABLE BOOK

**The perfect gift for yourself or a loved one**

Available to purchase where all good books are sold and at aremediabooks.com.au

*These are the adventures of a lifetime, every time.*

Pig! Rolli
Tawny Eagle ~~Buffalo~~
Nairobi Game Park.
Rock Hyrax (Squirrel like)
32
GAME CHECKLIST
African Civet
African Hare
Antelope,
Baboon, O
Bat-eared
Bongo
Bush Baby
Bush Pig
Bushbuck
Cape Buffa
Caracal
Cheetah
Dik-Dik
Eland
Elephant
Gazelle, G
Thom
Genet cat
Gerenuk
Giant Fore
Giraffe, Ma
Retic
Grey Duiker
Hippopotamu
Hunting Dog
Hyrax
Impala
Jackal, Bla
Gol
Sid
Klipspringer
Kongoni
Red-billed Ox-pecker
~~Hartebeest~~
saddle bill stork
yellow bellied
Hammerhead
EQUATOR
DAR ES SALAAM

# ABERCROMBIE & KENT

LIFE, WELL-TRAVELLED

Call 1300 589 717, speak to your travel advisor or visit abercrombiekent.com